

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, November 09, 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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Wednesday November 09, 2005

Police investigators receive training at Special Court

Twenty-four senior Police investigators drawn from around the country Monday 7th November began a two-week training course at the Special Court. The course, which focuses on Major Case Management, is being funded by a grant from the Canadian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). In November and December, two groups of Police officers would receive training which will be followed in January and February of 2006 by a second round of two courses on Source/Witness Protection. This training is aimed at increasing the professionalism of the Sierra Leone Police while building their capacity in law enforcement following more than a decade of civil war. The course and its training is the result of a request made

by the Office of the Prosecutor to the Canadian Government.

The training is essentially in the hands of senior investigators of the Special Court. The Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court- Desmond de Silva, QC and Chief Investigator- Gilbert Morissette launched the training. Representing the Sierra Leone Police were Assistant Inspector-General- Chris Charlie of Crimes Services and CID Director- Moussa B. Lappia. In his opening remarks, Mr. de Silva told the Police officers that the Special Court is not going to just walk away from Sierra Leone after its work is completed. Instead, he said, "we intend to leave a significant heritage of an improved commitment to the rule of law and a more professional Police Force with the specific

capacity to maintain a Major Case Management System and to provide witness protection services into the future. I hope this will result in greater public confidence in the Police and a stronger partnership between the Police and the community." said Mr. de Silva. The Special Court is an independent tribunal established jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone. It is mandated to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone after 30 November 1996.

To date, the Prosecutor has indicted eleven persons on various charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. Nine indictees are currently in the custody of the Court.

Come on! Who is afraid of Charlie Boy in Sierra Leone?

By Alhaji Morikeh Fofana
Nov 8, 2005, 08:28

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That former war monger and Special Court indictee Charles Taylor did meddle into affairs that not only triggered the onslaught of wars in Sierra Leone and Guinea but also directly links him with an absurd desire to be ranked "the godfather/mentor" to this region's war mongers, is now incontestable!

The atrocities of both wars would be told to generations yet unborn. His quasi asylum to Nigeria was arranged at the time in complete good faith by ECOWAS, AU and the international community, to avoid a brewing Liberian catastrophe. Someone very authoritative in Charles Taylor's going on exile in Nigeria, gave reason that Charles Taylor has an immense support in Liberia.

Nigerians, Liberians and Sierra Leoneans died for peace to return to that country. What is this whispering innuendo that ECOWAS is afraid of Charles Taylor's supporters? But I question this fact or statement because in the recently held election there was no support for either Charles Taylor, his party or his surrogate, so where is this support for Charles Taylor that they were talking about. Roland Chris Yarkpah (NPP), Charles Taylor's surrogate got 3,296 votes or 3.9% of a total of 88,080 votes cast. (Foday Sankoh was arrested and put behind bars here in Freetown. Despite his widely acclaimed support in the country, his party, the RUF failed to get not even a seat in parliament). So I do not know who the hell is afraid of Charles Taylor not Tejan Kabbah anyway. It appears some people are still on the pay roll of Charles Taylor.

War mongers like Taylor must be weeded out of the sub-region for security reasons. His paranoid presence sends out a negative idea, that rebel struggles are a means to an end, as such, the risk for like minds to opt for such a channel, remains if he should get off the special court's hook!

Institutionalised state criminals whose human rights datas became an issue like Slobodan Mulosovitch, Iraq's Saddam Hussein, the late Siad Barri of Somalia, late Idi Amin of Uganda and Foday Sankoh of Sierra Leone to name but a few, all perished under local and international pressure. Where then is this fear of a small don like Charlie boy? He is no longer a head-ache to ECOWAS and soon he would reach his Waterloo! His criminal records alone would more than justify any propeople action by Liberians, Sierra Leoneans or Nigerians.

Often, when open discussions flow around him, people make mention of Charles Taylor's influence in Liberia, AU, USA - wherever! Alas, the electoral dispensation in Liberia has out-rightly proved as false such rumours. He has never been the people's choice rather he was forced upon the Liberians, who only accepted thinking he would be an option to their national quagmire. His representative in the elections was not able to clinch enough votes to qualify him into today's (May 8th, 2005) run-off elections. This clearly concludes ECOWAS's and the international community's findings that Taylor did use media machinations, and a reign of terror to a very large extent in Liberia and had an agenda to spare forth terror yet again on his critics. Thanks that he was diplomatically smuggled to Nigeria, now the world can clearly see how Taylor planned to rig elections and yet again terrorise this part of the world. Liberians' vote confirms and consolidates the fact that people must never be underestimated. This is power to the people, ECOWAS, (which is a paramount and much advocated Nkrumah idea for African unity) is now a sub-regional organisation with a standing army, well adapted and serves as a better option for African addressing their own African problem. Of course, there have been occasions when foreign soldiers actually worsen situations on the ground in Africa. Nigeria's big brotherly approach was very instrumental, as they formed the bulk of soldiers in the outfit, and lost many in Liberia.

Paranooids like Charles Taylor doubtfully grasp the essence of such qualified regional entities, and it took the lives of thousands of Liberians, Nigerians and Sierra Leoneans for him to question his motives and return to the ballot box.

He did win initially (many right thinking people though attribute his success to fear of his consistent reign of terror at the time). See the trend now! His political analysts were afraid to give him correct data, related with his bloody dispensation that only reduced his potential of clinching an election victory devoid of his direct scrutiny for a second time. The Taylor time bomb was detonated by ECOWAS, AU and the international community and the elections result now prove that the Taylor time bomb scare is now history - so who is really afraid of Charlie boy now? I cannot deny, rather I'd question the possibility that he has some big guns that supported his policies in ECOWAS, AU or wherever USA? Alas, what a trashing for his few braggarts, machinating fake reports of a now

existent Taylor domination soon, they would fade into thin air, leaving the solitary paid up don all alone in his soup! I think that initially you were paid to do a bad-done job, well it would soon be time to sing, as everyone knows that when Taylor ran out of cash he traded timber to Marseille (France) or diamonds to Antwerp. Your time is up, I think he must be stripped of his African - status (paid up, myopic paranoia). (May Allah grant the thousands you slaughtered rest in eternity) **Bring Charles to the Special Court in Sierra Leone!**

Awareness Times
Wednesday November 04,
2009

Where are all the topoi Lawyers

I have been following with keen interest events surrounding the Hinga Norman and the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) constitutional saga.

What is of particular interest to me is the fact that a chained man in the person of Chief Samuel Hinga Norman (currently in the custody of the so called Special Court for Sierra Leone) is left all alone to fight a battle which by all indication has the potential of benefiting a lot of people, if won.

It could be recalled that a few days leading to the recently concluded national delegates convention of the ruling SLPP, the detained Chief Samuel Hinga did forward a motion in the Supreme Court of Sierra Leone, raising critical issues challenging the legality of the SLPP convention which was slated for August 19th-20th 2005, in Makeni Northern Sierra Leone.

As the prevailing system in the judiciary could have it however, the matter was simply dismissed on the grounds that Chief Norman had no 'locus standi'.

Although the scheduled date for the convention was altered as a result of Chief Norman's move, yet the convention went on and at the end, national officials were elected.

Barely over a month after the convention, Chief Norman has again filed in another motion, this time categorically challenging the legality of the election of Mr. Solomon E. Berewa as Leader and Presidential Nominee of the SLPP, while he doubles as Vice President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

While it remains to be seen whether Chief Norman will have the Locus standi this time round to pursue the matter, it is however worthy of note that Chief Norman still has faith in the

same system that threw his initial case out of court on grounds relating to the so called 'Locus standi'.

One justification the judges gave for throwing Chief Norman's case was that the matter should first go through the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC).

Be it as it may, the PPRC which had remained defunct for over a decade now, only saw the first phase of its resuscitation a couple of weeks ago with the appointment by H.E the President Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of the commissioners.

It however goes without saying that the commissioners are yet to be sworn in and that besides, no known sincere efforts on the part of government have been made to ensure that this all important entity in the political dynamics of the country is made fully operational at least in the nearest future.

It therefore remains to be seen whether the seeming inordinate delay in setting up the commission will in any way affect the chances of Chief Norman winning his case.

One thing that is worthy of note is the level of courage so far exhibited by Chief Norman to put up a 'lone-man's challenge to what has been viewed by many as a crucially sensitive issue.

The big question now is why is it that it is the badly disadvantaged Chief Samuel Hinga Norma who is taking up the fight all by himself? Where are the Margais? Some sound minds would ask. Or is it that the only thing they can do is to quit the party rather than taking the bull by the horn and challenging what they think in lawfully immoral?

Where are the judges of the Supreme Court? Could it be that they are constrained to act otherwise?

What's going on with the Ombudsman? Is it true that he has sacrificed his

obligations to the masses for fear of being given the boot-remember he was the man in charge of the SLPP convention who at the end of it all described both the conduct of the event and its outcome as free and fair.

I am simply a journalist and not in any way a lawyer. But my reading of the provisions contained in the in-use 1991 National Constitution have so far made me feel convinced that Chief Norman indeed has a case to make.

All what is important now is how he intends to make his case and who seats on it.

This piece will make no sense if I decide to leave out the relevant portions of the 1991 National Constitution that made me feel convinced that Chief Norman actually has a case to make.

To start with, section 35 (4) and 76 (1) (h) of the 1991 National Constitution state "35 (4) No political party shall have as a leader a person who is not qualified to be elected as a Member of Parliament". 76 (1) (h) says further, "No person shall be qualified for election as a Member of Parliament if he is for the time being the President, the Vice President, a Minister or a Deputy Minister under the provisions of this constitution."

Section 14 (1) of the Political Parties Act goes on to associate with the foregoing references when it states that "A political party shall not have as a founding member or as a leader of the party or a member of its executive body, whether national or otherwise, a person who is not qualified to be elected as a Member of Parliament under the constitution."

Sections 27 and 29 of the Political Parties Act even went further to outline drastic consequences that may follow upon violations of the Act and the National

Constitution and other specified misconduct by a given political party.

Under section 27 of the act for example, the PPRC "May apply to the Supreme Court for an order to cancel the registration of any political party, a virtual banning order in effect, where the party defaults or commits any misconduct as specified in section 24 (1) thereof.

Taking the foregoing into perspective therefore, it is only fair to suggest even from a lay man's point of view that there is indeed a clear case to make, and to answer.

The only thing that will warrant an opposite interpretation in my view is when it becomes out rightly clear that the Political Parties Act and the in-use 1999 National Constitution of Sierra Leone have in fact been rendered null and void.

The big question now is what happens if Chief Norman turns out to be the winner?

One other question that is worthy of note is whose case is Chief Norman actually fighting?

Some curious minds will even want to know who the real hero is. Is it the man who despite his current predicament that should put up the challenge alone? Or is it those with the crowd behind them but are seemingly afraid of their shadows? A food for thought.

One thing that is worthy of note is the level of courage so far exhibited by Chief Norman to put up a 'lone-man's challenge to what has been viewed by many as a crucially sensitive issue

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report

**CONTINUED FROM
LAST EDITION
ECOWAS, OAU AND
THE COMMONWEALTH
ENTER THE FRAY**

Charter, which provides that "no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangement or by regional agencies without the authorisation of the Security Council", the proposals were tabled before the UN Security Council for approval. The UN Security Council Resolution 1132 of 8 October 1997 endorsed the sanctions but declined to endorse the use of force to remove the junta from power or an embargo on humanitarian to "employ all necessary means to enforce the implementation of this decision". Prior to the endorsement of sanctions and embargo, but after coup of 25 May 1997, the UN Secretary-General appointed Mr. Francis Okelo of Uganda as the new Special Envoy to Sierra Leone.

63. The sanctions imposed by ECOWAS and UN were broadly welcomed by Sierra Leonean opposed to the AFRC. However, the measures took a heavy toll on the civilian population. The fact that ECOMOG targeted humanitarian aid in enforcing the sanctions partly contributed to the suffering of civilians. On 7 November 1997 the World Food Programme, warned that the health of thousands was at stake because humanitarian assistance had not been allowed to cross in Sierra Leone from Guinea. On 11 November 1997 the ECOMOG Field Commander, General Victor Malu, announced that clearance would be given for food aid to be brought into Sierra Leone "within days", but such clearance was not given until the end of the year. ECOMOG was also accused of sinking boats carrying food shipments as they entered the port of Freetown.

64. In spite of the worsening humanitarian situation, ECOMOG and the international community believed that the sanctions were vital to the success of the intervention. This was also the view held by host Sierra Leonean. Peter Penfold, the former UK High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, remarked that "the people of Sierra Leone were resolved to undergo anything in exchange for democracy."

65. Testimonies to the commission suggest that the sanctions and embargo greatly contributed to the junta's willingness to meet with the ECOWAS Committee of Five on 23 October 1997, Conakry, Guinea for a fresh round of Peace Talks.

66. At the Conakry meeting of October 1997, the representatives of the junta and the ECOWAS Committee of Five agreed that the junta would hand over power to President Kabbah on 22 May 1998, but that the sanctions and embargo provided for in UN Security Council Resolution 1132

were to be maintained. Provisions were made for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the disarmament, demobilizations and reintegration of all combatants. Disarmament and demobilization of combatants were to commence on 1 December and end on 31 December 1997. Humanitarian assistance, which would be monitored by ECOMOG and UN military observer operations, would recommence on 14 November 1997. All those involved in the coup were granted immunity from prosecution. This agreement came to be known as the Conakry Peace Plan. In a communiqué issued by the Committee. It was recognized that Sankoh was expected to return to Sierra Leone in order to support the peace process.

On 5 February 1998, the AFRC launched an attack on a ECOMOG patrol team. ECOMOG forces launched a full-scale attack and forcefully removed the military junta from power

67. In November 1997, the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, invited President Kabbah to attend the Commonwealth summit in Edinburgh as his personal guest. President Kabbah was given the opportunity to put across the problem of Sierra Leone to the summit. The summit condemned the military dictatorship in Nigeria and its abysmal human rights credentials, but noted "the positive contribution the country was making through ECOWAS in support of democratic government in the region. The summit also condemned the democratic government in the region". The summit also condemned the military junta in Sierra Leone and called for the reinstatement of Kabbah's government. It suspended Sierra Leone from participating in the councils of the Commonwealth and Peter Penfold, British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, went with Kabbah and his cabinet to Guinea to demonstrate the determination of the British government to support democracy in Sierra Leone. The British government also provided £250,000 to Kabbah and his cabinet while they were in exile in Guinea. These funds were used to run the government-in-exile. The British government also funded the setting up of Radio

98.1 FM. The radio station was an effective propaganda machine used by the government against the military junta.

68. The Conakry Peace Plan seemed like a viable framework for peace in Sierra Leone. In a press release issued on 5 November 1997, Kabbah stated that he found the peace plan acceptable and that the Conakry Peace Plan continued a number of positive elements which would lead to the resolution of the crisis in Sierra Leone. Kabbah pledged that his government would do everything possible to co-operate with ECOWAS and its monitoring grip, ECOMOG

69. In spite of the acceptance of the Conakry Peace Plan by all the parties to the conflict, each gave it a different interpretation. Questions in relation to disarmament, the Army, the release of Sankoh, and Nigeria's dominance in ECOMOG became the subject of several unproductive meetings between the junta and ECOMOG

70. At its seventh meeting in Abuja on December 1997 the ECOWAS Committee of Five maintained that the Conakry Peace Plan remained the best framework of the restoration of peace and constitutional order in Sierra Leone. The reality was that the Conakry Peace Plan was rapidly collapsing.

71. The international community was not enamoured with the Nigeria ruler, Sani Abacha, who while leading a dictatorship back hogs presented himself internationally as a fighter for democracy in Sierra Leone. In its desire to distance itself from Sani Abacha, the international community declined to provide much-needed support for the Nigeria-led ECOMOG

SANDLINE INTERNATIONAL: KABBAH BRINGS IN ANON-STATE PRIVATE ARMY.

72. The period following the 1997 coup saw the biggest diplomatic engagement on Sierra Leone since the start of the conflict in 1991; it became clear that force would be needed to remove the junta. Kabbah and his government sought the services of non-state, profit-making outfit. Kabbah contracted the British private military company, Sandline International. It has been alleged that it was the British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Peter Penfold, who introduced Sandline to the President. In an interview with the Commission, Penfold denied this version of events but acknowledge that Kabbah did consult him on the terms of the Sandline contract. Kabbah's former diplomat and intelligence operative, Bowen was Sandline's representative in the West African Region and a friend of Penfold. By the middle of July 1997, Tim Spicer, the head of

Sandline International, had flown to West Africa to meet with Kabbah and WCOMOG

73. Sandline was contracted in the sum of US\$1.5 million a month to provide training, arms and equipment support to the pro-government forces. Sandline International was also allegedly asked to plan, execute and co-ordinate an assault on Freetown. Sandline's operations in Sierra Leone were reportedly financed by a Vancouver-based Indian national, Rakesh Saxena.

74. Sandline was registered in the Bahamas and had its headquarters in Chelsea, sharing its premises with Branch Energy Oil. It also had offices in the USA headed by Bernie McCabe, a former officer in the US Army Special Forces.

75. The operations of Sandline International in Sierra Leone had no independent structure. Sandline depended on ECOMOG, which co-ordinated the activities of the pro-Kabbah forces within and outside of Sierra Leone. Sandline may have been forced to operate covertly because of a UN arms embargo on the Government of Sierra Leone and the AFRC junta at the time.

76. By the end of 1997, the Conakry Peace Plan was in tatters. The Kamajors, a pro-government civil defence militia, had launched "Operation Black December", attacking several junta positions. The Kamajors succeeded in taking most of the major roads in east and south of the country. By the beginning of 1998, skirmishes between the junta and ECOMOG security situation deteriorated, the ground in Sierra Leone increased. Rhetoric from the exiled Government ECOMOG and the junta moved increasingly away from peace and back to war.

77. On 5 February 1998, the AFRC launched an attack on a ECOMOG patrol team. ECOMOG forces launched a full-scale attack and forcefully removed the military junta from power. On 10 March 1998, President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was reinstated.

78. ECOMOG deserves credits for its role in Sierra Leone. Nigeria's role should be highlighted. It provided the bulk of the military resources deployed in Sierra Leone in the name of ECOWAS/ ECOMOG. Many ECOWAS Member States, like Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Niger and Benin, lacked the resources to do much beyond voting on resolution at ECOWAS meetings. While there has been no suggestion that Ghana did anything to fuel the war. Ghana's contribution to the search for peace was not significant. Countries such as Burkina Faso and Liberia were covert backers of the rebels.

62. ECOWAS heads of government at the twentieth ordinary summit, in Abuja from 29 August 1997, proposed the imposition of economic and other sanctions on the junta. These sanctions covered weapons, petroleum and petroleum products, a travel ban on members of the AFRC and members of the families and an embargo on humanitarian aid. Recognizing Article 53 of the UN

**UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 08 Nov 2005**

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

International Clips on Liberia

08/11/2005 11:58:42

Liberia votes for peace in presidential run-off

by Lauren Gelfand

MONROVIA, Nov 8 (AFP) - Liberians cast ballots for peace Tuesday in a run-off pitting football icon George Weah against banker Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in the race to become the first post-war president of Africa's oldest independent republic.

"I checked my box for peace," said Gabriel Taylor after leaving a polling station in the central town of Tubmanburg, leaning heavily on his nephew who escorted him to the ballot box as a concession to the older man's blindness. "We are going to suffer if we don't have a good president, so it is up to us to show the young people how important it is to choose a good leader."

Tuesday's run-off unfolded mostly peacefully around the forested west African country.

Weah warned of sanctions in Liberia vote over claims of cheating

MONROVIA, Nov 8 (AFP) - Liberian presidential candidate George Weah and his party risk sanctions should they continue to allege cheating and impropriety in the first round, the electoral commission said Tuesday as the country voted in a run-off election. After he cast his ballot Tuesday morning, the footballing icon reiterated claims that he had earned 800,000 votes, or 62 percent, in the October 11 first round but that "in the interests of peace" they accepted the results that gave him a 28.3-percent share.

08/11/2005 12:05:21

Election violence reported in Liberia

Monrovia (dpa) - Violence broke out Tuesday in presidential run-off elections. A young man stabbed another man during an argument in the northeastern town of Ganta and was later arrested by UNMIL peace keeper, correspondents reported. In Gbarnga, central Liberia, a former general of Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia was arrested by UNMIL peace keepers after protesting against the conduct of the poll and behaved in a disorderly manner, Star radio reported.

The incidents followed threats Monday by supporters of Weah's Congress for Democratic Change and the All Liberian Coalition Party of former warlord Alhaji Kromah to burn down the home of Aisha Conneh, the estranged wife of former defunct rebel LURD chairman Sekou Damate Conneh.

Low turnout marks Liberia second-round presidential vote

by Lauren Gelfand and Zoom Dosso

MONROVIA, Nov 8 (AFP) - Liberians voted Tuesday to choose between footballer George Weah and Harvard-educated banker Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, each vying to be the first post-war president of Africa's oldest independent republic.

From Ganta on the northern border with Guinea through the central towns of Gbarnga and Tubmanburg to the capital, a marked decrease in voter numbers from the high turn-out in the October 11 first round was reported.

Correspondents and officials reached in some towns said the queues waiting to mark ballots with a purple thumbprint were shorter than they had been when the electoral process started after years of back-to-back conflict. European Union chief observer Max Van De Berg, on an early morning tour of polling stations in Monrovia, said turnout "looks like a little less" than in October, "but we cannot say until the end of the day."

Liberians vote in soccer star vs technocrat runoff

By Daniel Flynn

MONROVIA, Nov 8 (Reuters) - Liberians voted on Tuesday to choose whether their first post-war president will be a popular millionaire soccer star who dropped out of high school or a Harvard-trained former finance minister.

Although Tuesday's initial turnout was not as big as the first round, when voters swamped polling stations, lines formed outside voting centres in churches and schools among the crumbling, bullet-pocked buildings of the capital Monrovia. Other voters trekked on foot to makeshift election centres set up in tents and huts in upcountry jungle areas.

BBC Last Updated: Tuesday, 8 November 2005, 08:29 GMT

Liberians choose post-war leader

The people of Liberia have started to vote in a presidential run-off - the first since the end of 14 years of war.

Ex-football star George Weah is facing Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf - seeking to be Africa's first elected female leader. Long queues of voters have formed outside the polling stations. Some turned up four hours before voting was due to start.

Thousands of observers are monitoring the poll, along with 15,000 United Nations peacekeepers. They say they will deal swiftly with any trouble-makers. The troops are being supported by some 3,000 newly trained Liberian police who were deployed last week. But correspondents say the past few months of campaigning have been remarkably peaceful.

08/11/2005 03:48:14

Brains or brawn? Liberians choose between soccer star, Harvard-educated woman

By TODD PITMAN, Associated Press Writer

MONROVIA, **Liberia** (AP) _ Liberians were choosing on Tuesday between a wealthy international soccer star and a Harvard-educated female politician vying for the country's top job in a brains-versus-brawn presidential runoff that many hope will herald a new era after a quarter century of coups and war.

Memory-scarred Liberian refugees wary of returning

By Orla Ryan

BUDUBURAM, Ghana, Nov 8 (Reuters) - It is nine years since Comfort York was torn from her family by Liberia's civil war and she does not know if they are dead or alive. Her last glimpse of her husband was of him being bound and beaten by government soldiers in Monrovia in their burning house. She sent her children to her mother's home for safety and fled eastwards, eventually arriving as a refugee in Ghana.

She fights back tears when asked about the fate of her loved ones. "I don't know, I hate to think of it," she said, the memories still too raw to dwell on. York is one of 42,000 refugees living in Buduburam refugee camp in Ghana who are closely watching the presidential election in Liberia pitting soccer millionaire George Weah against former Finance Minister Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

BBC News website Last Updated: Monday, 7 November 2005, 16:27 GMT

Liberia: About to bounce back?

By Joseph Winter

As Liberians prepare to elect their first president after 14 years of war, the story of one rubber farmer encapsulates both the problems and potential of Liberia - once one of West Africa's most successful economies.

Annan encourages Liberians to vote in elections

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 7, 2005 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called on all Liberians registered to vote in the second round of presidential elections, UN spokeswoman Marie Okabe said Monday.

In a statement released by the spokeswoman, Annan said he is pleased to note that the Liberian National Elections commission has put in place all the necessary arrangements for the second round of presidential elections to take place on Tuesday. "The Secretary-General calls on all Liberians registered to vote to do so in a peaceful and orderly manner, just as they did during the first round on Oct. 11," Okabe said.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored yesterday at 18:45 pm)*

Transitional Government Declares 8 November National Holiday

- In its official pronouncement yesterday, National Transitional Government Chairman Charles Gyude Bryant declared 8 November as a national holiday to enable Liberians to exercise their right to vote. He called on Liberians to turn out in large numbers to vote as they did on 11 October.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Transitional Government Leader Warns Political Parties to Desist from Pre-Victory Declarations

- Delivering his pre-election nationwide address yesterday, Chairman Bryant warned the two political parties in the run-off election to refrain from premature victory announcements.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Elections Commission Says It Is Prepared for Run-off Election

- NEC Information Officer Bobby Livingstone told Radio Veritas yesterday that voting materials had been sent to the 3,070 polling centres nationwide reassuring that the commission and its partners have taken the required steps to ensure that the process was conducted freely and fairly.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

International Contact Group on Liberia Assures Electorate

- In a statement issued in Monrovia yesterday, the International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL) reassured Liberians that the run-off election would be free, fair and transparent announcing that thousands of elections observers had been deployed across Liberia to ensure the free, fair transparent poll.
- The ICGL said that it wanted the candidates, political parties and their supporters to remain calm and accept the runoff result with losers being willing to work with the new government.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

UN Secretary-General Wants Liberians to Hold Poll in Peace and Order

- United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called on Liberians to vote peacefully in the runoff to elect a President to lead the country into a new era of peace, democracy and prosperity. He said that UNMIL was working closely with Liberia's security agencies to maintain a safe and secure environment where voters would cast their votes without fear of intimidation or violence.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

United States Ambassador Leads United States Election Observers

- A United States Embassy press release yesterday said that American Ambassador to Liberia Donald Booth would lead an official delegation of U.S. election observers to observe the run-off election today.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

ELBS RADIO *(News monitored yesterday at 19:00 pm)*

Widows of Soldiers Press for Spouses Benefits

- Widows of soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia said that they would boycott the run-off election if the transitional government fails to disburse the benefits of their husbands who they said had died in defence of the country.
- Chairman Bryant appealed to the widows to be calm promising to meet with them next week. He described their concern as "legitimate."

STAR RADIO *(News culled from website today at 09:00 am)*

Police Stage Protest for Allowance Ahead of Deployment for Run-off Poll

- Speaking to Star Radio, Police Inspector-General Joseph Kerkula said that authorities had decided to disburse allowances to the officers at their places of assignment as a measure to check their deserting posts after being paid in Monrovia. He said some of the police officers had received their allowances and never traveled to their assigned posts for the 11 October elections.

Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board and would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Jeddi Armah at armahj@un.org.