

Supplement to Observer Group Report

Presidential Election: Second Round, 15 March 1996

The following report was prepared by the team of four Commonwealth Secretariat observers sent to Sierra Leone by the Secretary-General to observe the Second Round of the Presidential Election on 15 March 1996.

Background

None of the 13 presidential candidates who contested the election held on 26 and 27 February 1996 succeeded in securing the 55 per cent share of the vote required by law for an outright victory. The two most successful candidates – Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and Dr John Karefa-Smart of the United National People's Party (UNPP) – secured 35.7 per cent and 22.9 per cent respectively of the 748,846 votes cast in the ballot for President.

A second round of voting was therefore held on Friday 15 March 1996 between Mr Tejan Kabbah and Dr Karefa-Smart. Following requests from both the Head of State, Brigadier-General Julius Maada Bio, and the Chairman of the Interim National Electoral Commission, Dr James Jonah, the Commonwealth Secretary-General decided to send a Mission of four Secretariat officials to observe this second round. These officials, led by Dr Moses Anafu, had formed part of the staff support team for the Observer Group which had been present for the first round of the election in February.

Deployment

We arrived in Freetown on Wednesday 13 March 1996 and were deployed the following day in two teams of two. One team covered the Western Area and was based in Freetown. The second was sent to Sierra Leone's second city, Bo, the capital of the Southern Province. Both teams liaised with INEC and the political parties and worked closely with members of the Joint International Observer Group (JIOG), co-ordinated by the United Nations, as well as with domestic observers fielded by the Council of Churches of Sierra Leone. We were able to observe the final day of campaigning, election day itself and the counting of votes.

Although it was again not possible for voting to take place in every part of the country more polling stations were established on this occasion. This time there were 2,200, compared with around 1,900 during the first round.

The Campaign and the Media

The campaign was marked by three major political developments. First, talks between Mr Tejan Kabbah and Dr Karefa-Smart, which if successful might have resulted in a deal making the run-off unnecessary, broke down without agreement. Second, a number of political parties declared their support for the SLPP's Mr Tejan Kabbah. These included the People's Democratic Party (Sorbeh), the All People's Congress and the National Unity Party, the parties which were respectively placed third, fourth and fifth in the elections of 26-27 February 1996. Third, negative campaigning came to dominate much of the press coverage.

Party leaders had again toured the country prior to election day addressing sometimes large rallies. Loudspeaker vans were much in evidence. Although sometimes noisy and

boisterous the culmination of the campaign was peaceful. In Bo violence was feared on the evening before the election when a march of more than 2,000 supporters of Mr Tejan Kabbah converged at a crossroads in the centre of town near the UNPP office, outside which a crowd of about 100 supporters of Dr Karefa-Smart had gathered near a loudspeaker van. Observers were struck, however, by the good humour of the two sets of supporters. After some light-hearted banter the much larger group of Tejan Kabbah supporters danced away into town.

The print media devoted considerable space to the election, reproducing biographies of and interviews with the candidates and reporting on the charges and rebuttals made by their supporters. The Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS) attempted in vain to arrange a debate between the candidates but was able to produce several editions of their special election programmes *Elections Watch* (television) and *Elections Update* (radio). These programmes featured recorded interviews with the presidential candidates, coverage of important statements and film of the campaign. SLBS was eager to point out, however, that it did not indulge in mudslinging and smear campaigns of the sort featured in the print media. Its Code of Conduct, developed in co-operation with INEC, stated categorically that it should not involve itself in personal attacks and character assassination.

SLBS reporters were again attached to the two campaigns. On election day itself SLBS organised a special phone-in programme which featured calls from members of the public and reports from SLBS correspondents in Freetown, Bo, Kenema, Makeni and Port Loko. Election day coverage also featured an interview with INEC Chairman Dr Jonah, whose announcement of the result on Sunday 17 March was carried live by SLBS radio, which can be heard throughout the country.

SLBS had editorial control of its special election programmes. However, from 11 March the influence of the Government over the content of radio news bulletins was increased: scripts for incorporation into the radio news bulletins were prepared directly by the Government Information Service.

The Supplementary Register

Election day itself began with controversy. The NPRC Government had decided that those voters who had registered during the five-day supplementary registration period, from 19 to 23 February, could not vote in the second round, even though many of them had voted in the first.

INEC said in a press release on 14 March, the day before the second round election day, that 'the ground for this prohibition appears to be that the supplement was not presented to the NPRC by INEC twenty-four hours before polling began on the 26 February 1996, as required by Decree No.3 of 1996.' INEC explained that it had told the Government that it would not be possible to comply and that the political parties had agreed that the Decree required the Commission 'to do the impossible'. Early in March it had offered to present the supplementary list to the NPRC before the second round. However, it had been informed by telephone on the afternoon of 14 March that this was unacceptable. INEC appealed to all electors on the supplementary register 'not to present themselves at the polling stations as this may cause some confusion'.

However, electors did not hear or did not heed the warning. Early on election day we witnessed angry scenes at polling stations in Freetown as voters who had believed that they were entitled to vote protested to Presiding Officers. A large crowd formed outside the INEC Headquarters and there was some tension. INEC Chairman Dr Jonah, who estimated that the decision affected more than 90,000 voters, said that he was unhappy with the decision but made clear that INEC had no alternative but to comply with the government ruling. The two presidential candidates themselves together addressed crowds of their supporters in Freetown and appealed for calm. Eventually, the tension was defused, although many people believed that they had been 'cheated' of their right to vote.

Security

Security proved to be less of a problem than had been feared and the second round went ahead without violence or intimidation. During the first round of voting in February armed men had launched attacks in Freetown, Bo and Kenema and there had been fighting near other major provincial centres. Elsewhere the presence of armed men had prompted local people to flee into the bush and forced INEC to abandon plans to establish a number of polling stations. Prior to the second round of voting there had been rebel attacks near Bo and predictions of worse to come, including attacks on both Freetown and Bo on election day.

In the event, however, there were no attacks in the main cities and relatively little disruption of INEC's plans elsewhere. Indeed, polling stations were set up in a number of places which had been judged to be too insecure three weeks before – for instance, in parts of the Southern Province. Registration had taken place in 14 of the chiefdoms in the Southern Province but in the first round it had been possible to hold elections only in four of these. This time voting was due to take place in seven. We were told of only two places where security fears had led to the abandonment of or delay in implementing INEC plans for the establishment of polling stations.

Security at polling stations was again provided by police officers. Soldiers were deployed mainly outside the principal towns, to deter attacks by rebels. Liaison between INEC and the security forces appeared to be good and police and army units provided protection and transport for the delivery and collection of election equipment and materials. In some places, such as Bo, security was enhanced by the presence of *kamajors*, traditional security forces co-ordinated by local Paramount Chiefs and based on local hunting societies.

As in the first round, security at polling stations was generally discreet. Although as many as 12 *kamajors* were seen at one polling station in Bo, armed with machetes and rifles, their presence did not appear to arouse concern on the part of voters. In our experience, police officers were diligent and courteous and both the unarmed police and their armed colleagues in the paramilitary Special Security Division (SSD) clearly instilled confidence in and were trusted by the voters. Fears that elements in the armed forces might disrupt the election were not realised, indeed the conduct of the military was praised by INEC Chairman Dr Jonah and contributed to dispelling the considerable suspicion of the army which had been widely evident at the time of the first round.

The Conduct of the Poll

Voting was scheduled to begin at 7.00 a.m. and to conclude either at 6.00 p.m. or whenever all those in the queue at that time had voted. As in the first round, there was no voting in the refugee camps in Liberia and Guinea because the people there had been unable to register.

INEC was again confronted by serious logistical difficulties and the opening of some polling stations was delayed, in some cases because registers were initially unavailable. Some polling stations ran out of ballot papers in the afternoon and voters had to be sent to other polling stations to cast their ballots or voting had to be suspended while additional books of ballot papers were delivered. Generally, however, Presiding Officers reported that they had adequate supplies of materials and staff.

New ballot papers had been prepared for the second round, bearing the names of the two candidates, their parties and their party symbols. On arrival at the polling station voters' hands were checked for traces of indelible ink. They were issued with ballot papers, to be marked either with a pencil or thumbprint in polling booths which were well screened to provide for secrecy. The voter then deposited the ballot paper in the ballot box and his or her index finger was marked with indelible ink.

The conduct of the poll was again generally orderly and relatively efficient. Although queues at polling stations were sometimes long at the beginning of the day the majority of voters appeared to have cast their ballots by early afternoon, by which time many polling stations had no queues at all. Most electors appeared to understand the process and the layout of polling stations was good, although space was sometimes insufficient. Although we

did observe lapses by Presiding Officers and polling assistants they generally coped well and were helpful to old and disabled voters and to the minority of voters who were confused about the process.

We saw no evidence of systematic fraud or organised attempts to undermine the process. We were told of six cases of attempted multiple voting but no cases of personation. However, several Presiding Officers reported to us that they had had to turn away persons who were under 18 and on a number of occasions we were present when attempts at under age voting were made.

Relations between the parties were generally cordial and party agents appeared to co-operate well with election officials at polling station level. Almost all party agents told us that they were happy with the conduct of Presiding Officers and polling assistants and most expressed satisfaction with arrangements. However, while the agents may have had no complaints this was not the case with others in their parties, including some senior officials. There were some angry scenes in Bo when supporters of one party objected to the rulings of Presiding Officers on procedure, requiring the intervention of the police on at least two occasions, and protests were made to INEC.

Following the first round of voting in February there had been protests from three political parties that the indelible ink used at the end of the voting process was not sufficiently indelible. It was claimed that the ink could be washed off in less than the 72 hours claimed by the manufacturers. On this occasion, when a different coloured ink was used at most polling stations, no such protests were reported to us.

The Use of the Register

The major problem on election day, which we understand led to adjustments to the voting figures by INEC later, concerned the use of the register at polling stations. INEC had made clear in advance that voters' names had to be on and would be checked against the register and that for this round of elections voters should cast their ballots only where they were registered. Before being given a ballot paper the voter would be required to produce his or her voter registration document or, failing this, another form of identification such as an identity card or a driver's licence.

However, while some Presiding Officers implemented this procedure strictly, others did not. At some polling stations only those whose names were on that station's register and who were in possession of a voter registration document or other acceptable ID were allowed to vote there. At others those not on the register were allowed to vote provided that the Presiding Officer was satisfied that they were eligible, in which case a note was taken of their name, address and age. Where voter registration documents were presented the numbers were noted, although many voters appeared to have lost or mislaid their documents since the first round.

Departure from the practice prescribed by INEC in advance on the part of some Presiding Officers and the variation in practice which resulted was unfortunate. However, we believe that the Presiding Officers acted in good faith in an effort to ensure that voters were not disenfranchised, to process voters as fast as possible and because they believed that the procedures used would be acceptable. We do not believe that there was any systematic exploitation of the variation in practice on the part of the political parties or organised groups of voters. However, we believe that this aspect of the second round of voting should be examined by INEC so that appropriate improvements can be made for future elections.

This matter highlighted two shortcomings in INEC's organisation. First, the training given to Presiding Officers prior to the second round was clearly not always adequate. Had it been there should have been no variation in practice of the sort described above. Second, INEC's capacity to ensure uniform application of the prescribed procedures was deficient.

The problems referred to should have been prevented by or detected and then corrected by INEC co-ordinators, part of whose role was to ensure that procedures were implemented properly. Further, we noted that even when efforts were made to ensure uniform practice by means of radio announcements by senior INEC officials the guidance given was sometimes at

variance to that provided to Presiding Officers by INEC officials on the ground. Liaison between the most senior INEC officials and their juniors was not always as close as it might, or should, have been.

The Count

We were present for the counting of votes in both Freetown and Bo. As in the first round this took place at the polling stations themselves. After closing their polling stations Presiding Officers noted the number of unused ballot papers, removed the seals from the ballot box in the presence and full view of party agents and other observers, emptied the box and noted the total number of ballots cast. The ballots were allocated to two piles, one for each candidate, with each ballot paper displayed to the crowd, agents and observers and an announcement of the name of the candidate for whom the vote had been cast. The two piles of ballot papers were then counted, with each paper again displayed to the crowd. At the end of the count Presiding Officers informed those present of the result, which was then communicated to the INEC provincial headquarters.

The procedure was commendably transparent and, at least where our Observers were present, the conduct of the count was scrupulous.

Turnout and Result

When the results were compiled in Freetown it emerged that the turnout had been higher than expected in the Southern, Eastern and Northern Provinces, no doubt because of the improved security situation which had allowed for polling stations to be established outside the main towns and encouraged voters to vote. The lower than expected turnout in the Western Area was attributed to the Government's decision that those on the supplementary register should not be allowed to vote.

Complaints were made to INEC by Dr Karefa-Smart who later told the BBC that "before the election results were announced we set out some very serious violations of the law and the Constitution" and that his party had "significant doubts as to the election results". He believed that he would have won if he had gone to court, but in the national interest he had decided "to overlook all of these violations".

The result was announced by Dr Jonah shortly after 9.00 p.m. on Sunday 17 March. Following a protest from Dr Karefa-Smart and a recount in Kenema and Bo 70,000 votes were deducted from the total for Mr Tejan Kabbah. With the addition later of results from two polling stations which had not been received at the time of the announcement the final result was:

Candidate	Total Votes	National %
Ahmad Tejan Kabbah	609,525	59.24%
John Karefa-Smart	419,326	40.76%
Total	1,028,851	100%

Mr Tejan Kabbah won the Southern Province (209,462 votes to 18,831), Eastern Province (232,084 to 26,984) and the Western Area (84,635 to 72,397), while Dr Karefa-Smart won the Northern Province (301,114 to 83,344). A total of 15,802 ballots were declared rejected or spoilt.

Conclusion

INEC and its Chairman should again be commended for the way in which they met the many organisational and other challenges with which they were confronted. But the biggest tribute should go to the people of Sierra Leone who again impressed us all with their determination to exercise their right to vote.

There were undoubtedly shortcomings during the second round of voting, as there had been in the first round in February. However, there was free political activity during the campaign prior to the poll. The media were able to report the campaign and to reflect the views of both candidates and their supporters. The rebels of the RUF did not manage to disrupt either the campaign or the election itself and the security forces conducted themselves properly and enabled more polling stations to be established than in the first round. More than one million people voted. They were assisted by diligent and efficient election officials. The secrecy of the ballot was assured. The process was transparent, orderly and free from intimidation. The parties behaved responsibly. There was no evidence of any organised abuse – indeed, on the contrary, there was good faith all round.

On the basis of the observations we were able to make and taking all the circumstances into account, the election was credible, arrangements were such as to enable the will of the people to be expressed and the result reflected their wishes.

Ballot Paper: Presidential Election, Second Round

 REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 1996 					
Party Name	Candidate's Name	Party Initials	Party Symbol	Candidate's Photo	Voter's Mark
Sierra Leone People's Party	Ahmad Tejan Kabbah	S.L.P.P.			
United National Peoples Party	John Karefa-Smart	U.N.P.P.			

Annexes

ANNEX I

Composition of the Commonwealth Observer Group

Mr S K Singh (India – Chairman)

Mr S K Singh has had a long and distinguished career in the Indian Foreign Service. He served as Ambassador in Lebanon, Jordan, Cyprus, Afghanistan, Austria and Pakistan. He was India's Permanent Representative to the UN in Vienna and also Governor for India on the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency from 1982-85. He ended his diplomatic career as Foreign Secretary in 1990. For two years afterwards, he was Visiting Professor of International Affairs at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi. He was a member of the Commonwealth Observer Groups which observed the elections in Kenya in December 1992, Lesotho in March 1993 and South Africa in April 1994.

Mrs Georgina Chikoko (Malawi)

Mrs Georgina Chikoko is Electoral Commissioner in the Malawi Electoral Commission and has considerable experience in electoral work. She served as Technical Resource Officer in the Local Government Elections in South Africa in November 1995. She is currently serving as Provincial Resource Officer for the Local Government Elections in the KwaZulu-Natal Province, which will take place in May 1996.

The Hon Jarso Jillo Falana, MP (Kenya)

The Hon Jarso Jillo Falana is a Member of Parliament and Deputy Chief Whip in the Parliament of Kenya and has already served two terms in Parliament. He was awarded the Order of the Grand Warrior (OGW) of Kenya in 1994 for outstanding public service.

The Hon Terrence Gillette, MP (Jamaica)

The Hon Terrence Gillette has been a Member of Parliament in Jamaica since 1976. He has been a Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Mining since 1989 and is also Deputy Leader of Government Business and Chief Government Whip. He served as Jamaica representative in the ACP/EEC from 1990-94.

The Hon Rauff Hakeem, MP (Sri Lanka)

The Hon Rauff Hakeem is by profession an attorney-at-law/solicitor and has appeared before the original and Appellate Courts since 1984. He was elected to Parliament in 1994 as a member of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, and is Deputy Chairman of Committees within the Assembly. He is also a member of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Constitutional Reform. He was a permanent delegate representing the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress to the All Party Conference (1990-92) and is currently General Secretary of the Party. He has participated in national and international conferences on human rights and published several articles on constitutional and legal reform. He was a member of the Commonwealth Election Observer Mission to Tanzania in 1995.

Mr David Adeenze-Kangah (Ghana)

Mr David Adeenze-Kangah is Deputy Chairman of the Electoral Commission in Ghana. He has considerable experience in electoral work and participated in a Commonwealth election management course in Namibia in 1995. He was an election observer in South Africa's first democratic elections in April 1994 and in Tanzania in October 1995.

Mr Charles Edward Lasham (Britain)

Mr Charles Lasham is Chief Electoral Officer for the City of Liverpool and has statutory responsibility for the production of the electoral register for the city and the conduct of all elections held within the city. He has considerable experience in electoral work and has undertaken election assessments in several countries including Namibia, Seychelles and Tanzania. He has published various articles on electoral matters and participated in international seminars in many countries. He is a founder member of the Association of Electoral Administrators and was Chairman of the Association between 1990-92. He was an observer of the elections in Tanzania in 1995.

Mr William H Montgomery (Canada)

Mr William Montgomery is a diplomat and served in the Foreign Service of Canada from 1961-64, with postings to India, Thailand, Indonesia, Britain and the UN in Switzerland. He served as Canada's Ambassador to Indonesia from 1979-83 and as Commonwealth Assistant Secretary-General from 1987-93. Since 1994 he has been serving as Director of Pearson International Institute, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada.

The Hon Kiraitu Murungi, MP (Kenya)

The Hon Kiraitu Murungi is a Member of Parliament in Kenya. He is a lawyer and has appeared in both the High Court and the Court of Appeal of Kenya. He served as Secretary of the Kenya Section of the International Commission of Jurists and as Consultant to the Kenya Catholic Justice and Peace Commission from 1989-90. He also served as Consultant and Legal Adviser to the African Network for Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect. He was a member of the Committee of African Legal Experts which drafted the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and has served as Secretary for Human Rights and Democratisation for FORD-Kenya. He is currently Chairman of the Centre for Governance and Development in Kenya.

Mr Cecil Pilgrim (Guyana)

Mr Cecil Pilgrim was High Commissioner of Guyana to Britain from 1986-93 and, concurrently, Ambassador to France, The Netherlands, Yugoslavia and Unesco. During this time he sat on the Boards of several Commonwealth organisations including the Commonwealth Institute, the Commonwealth Foundation and the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation. He was also the Guyana representative on the International Maritime Organisation and the International Sugar Organisation. He began his career in the Foreign Service in 1967 and served in Jamaica, China, the former Soviet Union and Cuba where he was Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. He was a member of the Commonwealth Observer Group for the elections in South Africa in 1994.

HE Tuiloma Neroni Slade (Western Samoa)

Ambassador Neroni Slade was formerly Attorney-General and is now Western Samoa's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and concurrently Ambassador to the US and High Commissioner to Canada. He has served in both UN and Commonwealth Observer Missions, to the former Trust Territory of Palau in 1994, to Seychelles in 1992 and to Malaysia in 1990.

Mr Allister Sparks (South Africa)

Mr Allister Sparks is a distinguished journalist and has received several honours for his work. In 1985 he was honoured with a special international award for outstanding reporting on apartheid presented by Inter-Press Service. The award was part of the fortieth anniversary

celebrations of the United Nations in New York. He has lectured widely on South African affairs and media issues in many countries. He is the second South African journalist to be published in the prestigious American magazine, *The New Yorker*. An expanded version of his article on events leading to South Africa's transition to democracy has been published as a book under the title *Tomorrow is Another Country*.

SECRETARIAT SUPPORT STAFF

Dr Moses Anafu, Team Leader

Mr Christopher Child, Assistant to Observers

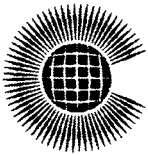
Dr Lucy Steward, Assistant to Observers

Mr Gregor MacKinnon, Assistant to Observers

Mr Navin Kumar, Assistant to Observers

Mr Prakash Ramgulam, Administrative Officer

Miss Cheryl Rebeiro, Secretary

ANNEX II**Press Release of 16 February 1996****Commonwealth
News Release**

96/6

16 February 1996

**COMMONWEALTH TO OBSERVE PRESIDENTIAL
AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN SIERRA LEONE**

A team of 12 Commonwealth observers will leave for Sierra Leone on Saturday 17 February 1996 to observe the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections due to take place on 26 February 1996. In making the announcement today, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, said:

"At the request of the Government of Sierra Leone, supported by all the political parties contesting the elections, I am sending a Commonwealth Observer Group to observe the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections which are to be held there on 26 February 1996. The overwhelming decision of the National Consultative Conference last Monday, 12 February 1996, to proceed with the elections as planned, is a ringing affirmation of the faith of the people of Sierra Leone in the democratic process, and has been endorsed by the Head of State, Brigadier Julius Maada Bio. This courageous decision has the support of the entire Commonwealth and has been reflected in the assistance which the Commonwealth has provided throughout the electoral process. The Observer Group will make a further important Commonwealth contribution towards entrenching democracy and assisting the search for lasting peace in the country."

The Commonwealth Observer Group for Sierra Leone will be led by **Mr S K Singh**, a distinguished retired diplomat from India. The other members of the Group are:

Mrs Georgina Chikoko
Electoral Commissioner, Malawi

Hon Jarso Jillo Falana
Member of Parliament, Kenya

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Hon Terrence Gillette

Member of Parliament, Jamaica

Hon Rauff Hakeem

Member of Parliament, Sri Lanka

Mr David Kangah

Deputy Chairman of the National Electoral Commission, Ghana

Mr Charles Lasham

Chief Electoral Officer, Britain

Mr William Montgomery

Director, Lester Pearson Institute, Dalhousie University, Canada

Hon Kiraitu Murungi

Member of Parliament, Kenya

Mr Cecil Pilgrim

Former Diplomat, Guyana

HE Tuiloma Neroni SladeAmbassador and Permanent Representative to the
United Nations, Western Samoa**Mr Allister Sparks**

Journalist, South Africa

The Group will be supported by a six-member team from the Commonwealth Secretariat led by Dr Moses Anafu, Assistant Director in the Political Affairs Division.

Note to Editors:

This will be the 17th Commonwealth team to observe national elections in a member state since October 1990. During this period Commonwealth observers have been present in Malaysia, Bangladesh, Zambia, Seychelles (three times), Guyana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Pakistan, South Africa, Malawi, Namibia, St Kitts and Nevis, and Tanzania. These observer missions follow a decision taken in 1991 by Commonwealth Heads of Government to support the promotion of democracy in member states.

ANNEX III**Arrival Statement of 17 February 1996**

Sierra Leone Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, 1996

Commonwealth Observer Group*News Release***ARRIVAL STATEMENT BY THE COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP**

We have come to Sierra Leone at the request of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, to observe the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections to be held on 26 February 1996. This follows an invitation from the Government and a visit by a Commonwealth Secretariat Planning Mission during which the political parties involved in the election confirmed that they welcome our presence here.

We come from many parts of the Commonwealth. As Observers, we will serve in our personal capacities and not as representatives of our respective governments or organisations to which we may belong. We have no executive role. Our broad objective is to observe the organisation and conduct of the elections in accordance with the laws of Sierra Leone and form an independent and impartial judgment of the credibility of the process. We will be based in different parts of the country both before and on the polling day and we will meet the contending political parties and others. We will naturally remain in close touch with the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC). At the end of our mission, we will present a report to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, who will make it available to the Government of Sierra Leone, to the political parties taking part in the elections and, thereafter, to all Commonwealth governments.

We look forward to our mission and feel honoured to be here for these important elections which we hope will mark Sierra Leone's transition to a multi-party democracy. Further, we hope that all Sierra Leoneans will join hands to make these elections proceed peacefully and successfully.

Note to Editors

The Commonwealth Observer Group to Sierra Leone has established an office at the Cape Sierra Hotel, Aberdeen, Freetown. For further information, please contact telephone: 272480: fax: 272431.

17 February 1996

ANNEX IV

Schedule of Engagements

Sunday 18 February

- 1930 Dinner hosted by Chairman in honour of Dr James Jonah, Chairman of Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC)
Venue: Lagoonda Complex, Freetown

Monday 19 February

- 0900 Briefing by officials of INEC: Mr Koroma (Assistant to the Executive Secretary), Mr Sam Graham (Legal Adviser), Mrs Regina Coomber (Registration Consultant) and Ms Kate Birsell (Voter Education)
- 1100 Briefing by Mr J A Bangali, Permanent Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, on the elections for the seats reserved for Paramount Chiefs
- 1130 Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General: Ambassador Berhanu Dinka
- 1430 British High Commissioner: HE Mr Ian McCluney
- 1545 Ghana High Commissioner: HE Brigadier Twumasi
- 1700 National Commission for Democracy: Dr Kadi Sesay (Chairwoman)
- 1730 Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service: Mr Babatunde Roland May (Director-General), Mrs Gina Banda (Deputy Director), Mr Tommy Tucker (Deputy Head of Programmes TV) and Mr Joshua Nicol (Special Assistant to the Director-General)
- 1930 Chairman's Reception for Observers and Invited Guests
Venue: Terrace, Lagoonda Complex, Freetown

Tuesday 20 February

- 0930 United National People's Party: Dr John Karefa-Smart, Leader and Presidential candidate, and Mr Frank Karefa-Smart
- 1030 Social Democratic Party: Mr Sylvester B Navo (Secretary-General) and Mr Paul Ngobeh
- 1115 Sierra Leone People's Party: Dr Prince Harding (Secretary-General) and Mr George Banda-Thomas (Legal Adviser)
- 1415 National Unity Party: Dr Richard Latiff (Public Relations Officer) and Mr M Momoh

- 1500 People's Democratic Party (Sorbeh): Mr Ibrahim Njai (Director of Research and National Campaign Manager) and Mr Osman Kamara (Secretary-General)
- 1600 People's National Convention: Mr Saidu Turay (National Publicity Secretary) and Mr Bassiru Savage (Assistant National Organising Secretary)
- 1730 National Unity Movement: Mr Reginald Schlenker-Williams (Secretary of Human Rights Committee and Spokesperson)

Wednesday 21 February

- 0930 Democratic Centre Party: Dr Stevens, Vice-Presidential candidate and Deputy Leader
- 1030 National Alliance Democratic Party: Dr Anthony A Sandi (Executive Member)
- 1115 People's Progressive Party: Mr Junisa Sesay (Assistant National Organising Secretary) and Mr A B S Kamara (Finance Officer)
- 1200 Sierra Leone Bar Association: Ms Hannah Ahmed (President)
- 1245 United Nations: Mr Gerald Ganz (Security Officer) and Ms Stefanie Luthy (Co-ordinator, Joint International Observer Group)
- 1500 Muslim Congress and the Supreme Islam Council: Alhaji K Swarray and Alhaji Mohammed Kamara
- 1530 Council of Churches of Sierra Leone: Rev Amadu Kamara (Secretary-General)
- 1645 US Ambassador: HE Mr John Hirsch
- 1715 Women's organisations: Ms Zainab Bangura (Women's Forum) and representatives of the Women's Movement for Peace
- 1745 Deployment briefing and distribution of Observers' material

ANNEX V**Deployment of Commonwealth Observers**

PROVINCE		LOCATION
Western Area	Mr S K Singh (Chairman) Mr William Montgomery Dr Moses Anafu Mr Navin Kumar	Cape Sierra Hotel Freetown
Southern Province	Mr Charles Lasham Hon Jarso Jillo Falana MP Mrs Georgina Chikoko Mr Prakash Ramgulam	Sir Milton Hotel Bo
Eastern Province	Hon Terrence Gillette MP Mr Allister Sparks Mr David Adeenze-Kangah Mr Gregor MacKinnon	National Pastoral Centre Kenema Private accommodation Sefadu
Northern Province	Hon Rauff Hakeem MP Dr Lucy Steward Hon Kiraitu Murungi MP Mr Christopher Child Mr Cecil Pilgrim HE Tuiloma Neroni Slade	Wesleyan Mission Makeni Teachers' College Port Loko FAO Guest House Kabala

ANNEX VI

Check List for Polling Station Visits and Observation Notes for Poll and Count



Sierra Leone Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, 1996

Commonwealth Observer Group

Tel: (232) 22 272 480
 (232) 22 272 267
 Fax: (232) 22 272 431/227

Cape Sierra Hotel
 Chalet No. 24
 Aberdeen, Freetown

CHECKLIST FOR POLLING STATION VISITS

Name of Observer(s):

District/Province:

Polling Station:

Time of Arrival:

Voters in Queue: Rate of Processing:

-
1. **Opening of Poll:** On time? Procedures followed?
 No/Yes No/Yes
 Details:
 2. **Layout and Facilities:** Good? Adequate? Poor?
 3. **Polling Staff:** Efficient? Satisfactory? Poor?
 4. **Security Presence:** Discreet? Intrusive? Oppressive?
 5. **Complaints by Party**
Polling Agents: No/Yes Details:
 6. **Complaints by Voters:** No/Yes Details:
 7. **Mood at Station?** Orderly? Tense? Chaotic?
 8. **Secrecy of Ballot:** Assured? Poor? Uncertain

9. Voting:

(a) Personation attempts alleged: No/Yes

Details:

(b) Multiple voting attempts alleged: No/Yes

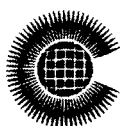
Details:

10. **Closing of Poll:** On time? Numbers still in queue?
Procedure followed? No/Yes

11. **The Count:** Are procedures being observed? No/Yes

12. **Apparent fairness overall:** Good? Acceptable?
Questionable?

13. **Other Comments:**



Sierra Leone Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, 1996

Commonwealth Observer Group

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Cape Sierra Hotel
Chalet No. 24
Aberdeen, Freetown

OBSERVATION NOTES FOR POLL AND COUNT

PART A

The Observers may focus particular attention on the following aspects of the conduct of the election:

THE CAMPAIGN

1. The extent of access to television and, especially, radio available to all parties.
2. The arrangements for the allocation of time for political broadcasts and advertisements on radio and television.
3. The extent of access enjoyed by the political parties to the print media.
4. The tone and content of political broadcasts, advertisements and posters put out by the political parties.
5. The conduct of political meetings.
6. The conduct of house-to-house canvassing of voters.
7. The voter education programme on radio and television conducted by the Interim National Electoral Commission, the National Commission for Democracy and others.
8. Permits for public meetings.
9. Access to printing facilities.
10. Access to funds and sources of funds.
11. Expenditure limits.

THE POLL

1. The location of polling stations.
2. Distances travelled by voters to polling stations, particularly in rural areas.
3. The length of time voters wait to cast their votes.
4. The steps taken to ensure that the secrecy of the ballot is assured.
5. The performance of electoral officials at the polling stations visited.
6. The procedure followed at the opening of the poll.
7. The adequacy or otherwise of facilities at polling stations and their state of readiness.
8. The procedures in place to ensure proper security of ballot papers, ballot boxes and official seals.
9. The general atmosphere at the polling stations visited.
10. Availability of adequate supplies, eg, ballot papers, official stamps and stamp-pads, indelible ink, etc.
11. Security of ballot papers prior to election.
12. Adherence to the prescribed voting procedure, including the application of indelible ink following the casting of ballots.
13. Access of party agents to polling stations.

THE COUNT

1. Inspection of seals.
2. The process of reconciling the number of people who voted with the number of ballots cast.
3. The determination of invalid ballots.
4. The conduct of electoral officers.
5. The facilities for party representatives to witness and verify the count.

PART B

Questions that may be put:

BEFORE POLLING DAY

1. Was the Voters' Register compiled in a satisfactory way? Were people missed out? Were the names of dead people included?
2. Who are the election officials? How were they chosen? Are voters confident that they will be impartial?
3. Is the person in the street satisfied with arrangements? Will he/she vote? If not, is he/she afraid to do so?
4. Have all parties been able to campaign freely? Has the campaign been free of intimidation, etc? Have all parties had full access to the mass media?
5. Is there freedom to advertise and distribute posters, leaflets, etc?

ON POLLING DAY

1. Before polling starts, are the ballot boxes empty? Are they properly sealed?
2. Are all procedures being adhered to?
3. Are all parties represented at polling stations? Are they satisfied with the process?
4. Are Voters' I.D.s being properly checked? Are only those who are in possession of a Voter's I.D. and listed on the register being allowed to vote?
5. Are voters apparently voting freely? Are they enthusiastic? Do they talk freely? Do they exhibit signs of fear or intimidation?
6. Do voters understand the procedures properly? If not, are the procedures being explained fully and impartially? Are attempts being made to suggest how voters should vote?
7. Is only one person at a time being allowed into the voting booth?
8. How long are voters waiting to vote? If a long time, are some being put off?

9. Will all parties be represented at polling stations throughout voting and count?
Are party polling agents adequately trained and vigilant?
10. Will observers have free access to all stages of the process?
11. Is the security presence oppressive?

THE COUNT

1. Are the boxes kept safe until opened? Are all parties present at opening?
2. Does the number of used ballot papers tally with the record of those who voted?
3. Are the papers counted properly? Are counting agents present? Are they satisfied with the procedure of the count?

ANNEX VII**Interim Statement of 28 February 1996**

Sierra Leone Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, 1996

Commonwealth Observer Group

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Cape Sierra Hotel
Chalet No. 24
Aberdeen, Freetown

INTERIM STATEMENT

The mandate of the Commonwealth Observer Group in Sierra Leone was to observe all relevant aspects of the country's Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, and to determine whether or not the people of Sierra Leone had the opportunity to express their will through the ballot.

We arrived in Freetown on Saturday 17 February 1996. Our leader called on the Chairman of the NPRC and Head of State, Brigadier General Julius Maada Bio, and we received extensive and in-depth briefings for four days from officials of the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC), representatives of the political parties, resident diplomatic missions, the media and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Our teams of observers were deployed to the four provinces of the country on 22 February. They covered Bo, Kenema, Port Loko, Kabala, Makeni, Kono and Freetown itself. In all these locations we received further briefings from representatives of local political parties, community leaders, NGOs and INEC officials.

We witnessed the closing stages of the registration process, the election campaign, and voter education. We observed the polling process on the two polling days, 26 and 27 February 1996, and a part of the count. No elections could have been held under more trying circumstances. The ongoing war in various parts of the country cast a long shadow over every aspect of these elections. There was unease, apprehension and a feeling of insecurity in many parts of the country, rendering the rural areas, especially in the East and the South, effectively inaccessible. The rebel Revolutionary United Front announced repeatedly that they opposed and disapproved of the elections. The attacks on Bo and Kenema on polling day as well as the gun and mortar fire in Freetown on the afternoon of the first day of polling, were obviously calculated to scare voters away and

generally intimidate the rest of the country. In addition logistical problems abounded and these hampered the transportation of voting materials. The registration of voters continued till the eve of poll.

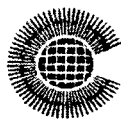
Even so, and against all odds, the people of Sierra Leone demonstrated their determination to have the elections and were able to ensure these were held. The voter turnout in the areas we observed was impressive. The citizen voters in the queues displayed determination, good humour, tolerance and patience. The polling officials as observed by us made up for their lack of experience by their diligence, sincerity and conscientiousness. They displayed dedication that compelled admiration. We believe that the vast majority of registered voters anxious to exercise their franchise had the opportunity to do so. Clearly, the unique circumstances prevailing in the country at the time of these elections resulted in shortcomings such as the late delivery of voters registers and certain other documents to the polling stations. But thanks to the resolution and determination of the people, despite several attempts to hinder the process, these elections where they could be held, remained free of fear and intimidation.

The results of the Parliamentary and Presidential elections remain to be announced. However, on the basis of our countrywide observation, and keeping in view the extraordinary circumstances attending these elections, the people of Sierra Leone saw them as the one opportunity they had to make a new beginning. They seized that opportunity with both hands. Their determination, dignity and patience deserve to be applauded. We congratulate the people for their maturity and the faith in democracy displayed by them.

INEC exhibited unstinted dedication in the face of heavy odds and the political parties worked in co-operation with the objective of restoring democracy in the country. We, as Commonwealth Observers, were privileged to witness, at close quarters, the determination of the people of Sierra Leone to achieve democratic civilian government in their country.

It is our hope and prayer that at the end of the electoral process, the transfer of power into the hands of the elected representatives of the people will be smooth and trouble free.

28 February 1996

ANNEX VIII**Departure Statement of 2 March 1996**

Sierra Leone Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, 1996

Commonwealth Observer Group

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Cape Sierra Hotel
Chalet No. 24
Aberdeen, Freetown

2 March 1996

**DEPARTURE STATEMENT BY MR S.K. SINGH
CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP
IN SIERRA LEONE**

We are today returning home after two weeks in Sierra Leone, observing the political process that has led the country towards democratic civilian governance.

On Wednesday 28 February, I had issued our Interim Statement on the electoral process. We had saluted the people of Sierra Leone for their determination and resolution to move their country towards democratic rule. We had commended the members and personnel of the INEC. We had complimented the leadership of Dr James Jonah. Today we would wish to congratulate the Head of State and Chairman of the NPRC, Brigadier-General Julius Maada-Bio, for his personal commitment to the transition.

The results of this momentous election are about to be declared. Whoever emerges the winner, the real victory already belongs to the people of Sierra Leone. They have shown that they are determined to build a country devoted to liberty, democratic values, peace and true development. They have become masters of their own fate. The gold and diamonds of peace are within reach.

Sierra Leone makes a new beginning. A world of opportunities lies ahead. They will need now to forge national unity. These elections have demonstrated that the people have the will, the courage and the stamina for this.

Peace, unity of purpose and reconstruction will all need to be based on the foundations of national reconciliation. For this will be required a true generosity of spirit. We believe that they have this generosity, and also the spirit of tolerance that alone can sustain it.

The war has shattered the country's economy and subjected the people to barbarity and misery.

The incoming civilian government, and all sides in the Parliament, leaders both of the Treasury and the Opposition will need charity and good will, generosity and mutual trust in abundant measure. We have no doubt the examples set for them by their people will guide them. In this society, we hope the people will continue to lead their leaders, as they did during the elections.

Sierra Leone is a member state of the Commonwealth. We hope its role as a vibrant democracy will be even more vigorous in our global association. We hope too that the other members of the Commonwealth will provide continuing support and assistance to the people of Sierra Leone.

As we say goodbye to them, our best wishes for peace, tranquillity, prosperity and nation building are with our brothers and sisters of Sierra Leone, and the leadership, that is emerging in this country.

ANNEX IX

Sample Ballot Paper, Parliamentary Elections, 26-27 February 1996

Party Name	Party Symbol	Party Initials	Voter's Mark
Democratic Centre Party		D.C.P.	
National Unity Party		N.U.P.	
People's Progressive Party		P.P.P.	
National Republican Party		N.R.P.	
People's National Convention		P.N.C.	
United National Peoples Party		U.N.P.P.	
National Democratic Alliance		N.D.A.	
All People's Congress		A.P.C.	
National Alliance Democratic Party		N.A.D.P.	
National Unity Movement		N.U.M.	
Coalition for Progress Party		C.P.P.	
National Peoples Party		N.P.P.	
Sierra Leone People's Party		S.L.P.P.	
Social Democratic Party		S.D.P.	
Peoples Democratic Party (Sorbeh)		P.D.P.	

ANNEX X

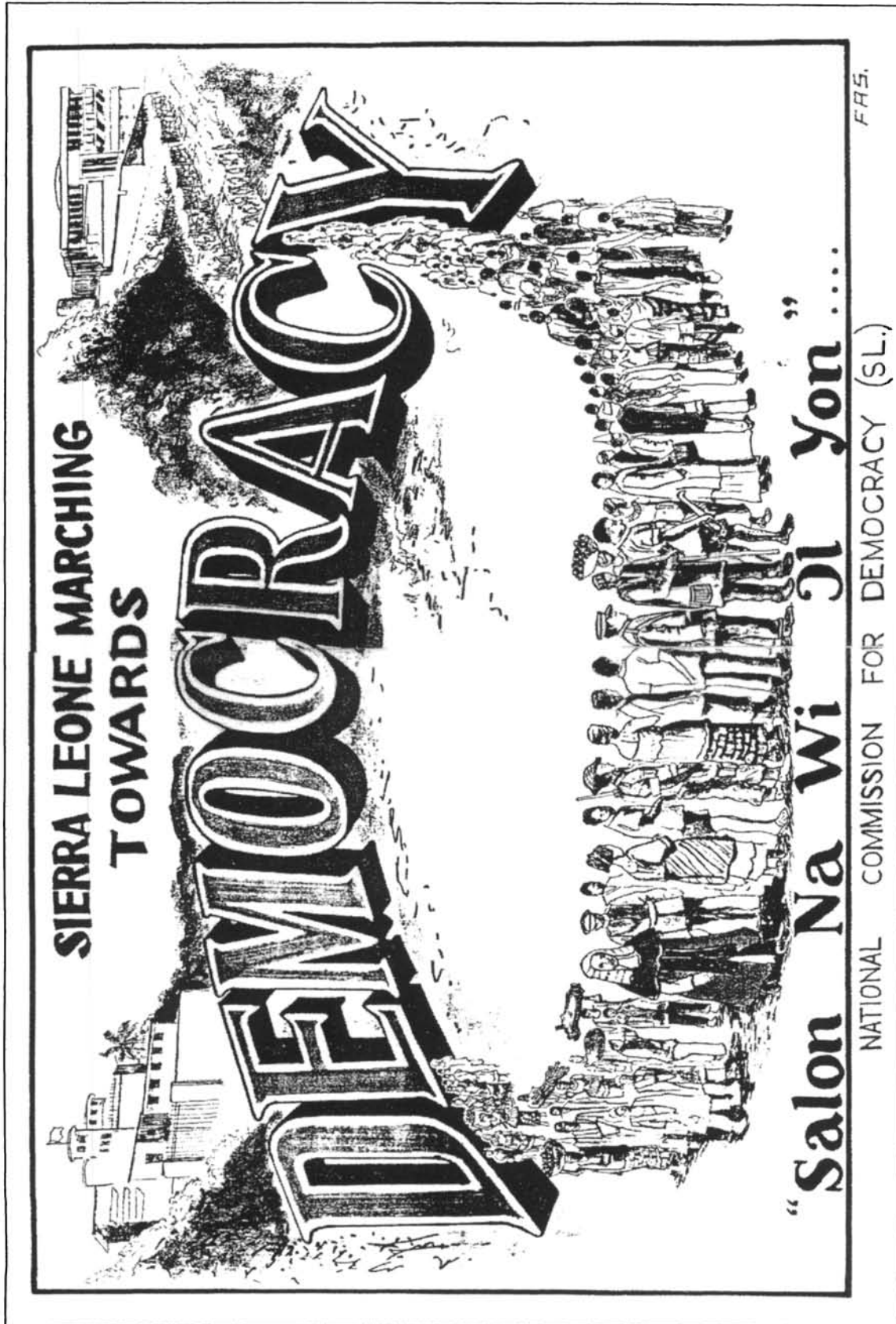
Sample Ballot Paper, Presidential Election, 26-27 February 1996

Party Name	Candidate's Name	Party Initials	Party Symbol	Candidate's Photo	Voter's Mark
Democratic Centre Party	Abu Aliah Koroma	D.C.P.			
National Unity Party	John Karimu	N.U.P.			
People's Progressive Party	Abass Chernor Bundu	P.P.P.			
National Republican Party	Stephen Sahr Membu	N.R.P.			
People's National Convention	Edward John Kargbo	P.N.C.			
United National Peoples Party	John Karefa-Smart	U.N.P.P.			
National Democratic Alliance	Amadu M. B. Jalloh	N.D.A.			
All People's Congress	Edward Mohamed Turay	A.P.C.			
National Alliance Democratic Party	Mohamed Yahya Sillah	N.A.D.P.			
National Unity Movement	Desmond Luke	N.U.M.			
Coalition for Progress Party	Jeredine Williams-Garbo	C.P.P.			
National Peoples Party	Andrew Turay	N.P.P.			
Sierra Leone People's Party	Ahmed Tejan Kabbah	S.L.P.P.			
Social Democratic Party	Andrew Victor Lungay	S.D.P.			
Peoples Democratic Party (Sorbeh)	Thaimu Bangura	P.D.P.			

ANNEX XI

National Commission for Democracy Voter Education Posters





ANNEX XII

Interim National Electoral Commission Posters

INEC - Ensuring Free and Fair Elections



POLLING STATION STAFF



PRESIDING OFFICER

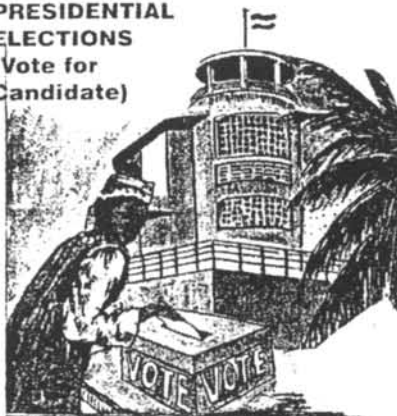


POLLING ASSISTANTS

OBSERVERS

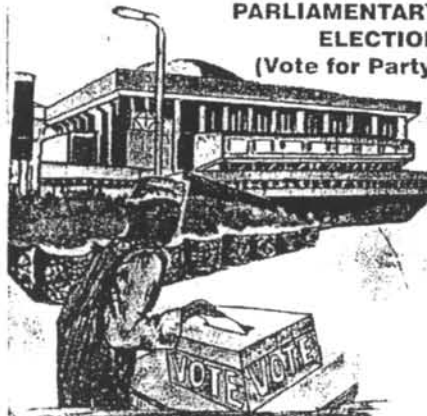
POLITICAL
PARTY
OBSERVERSINTERNATIONAL
OBSERVERSCIVIL SOCIETY
GROUPS

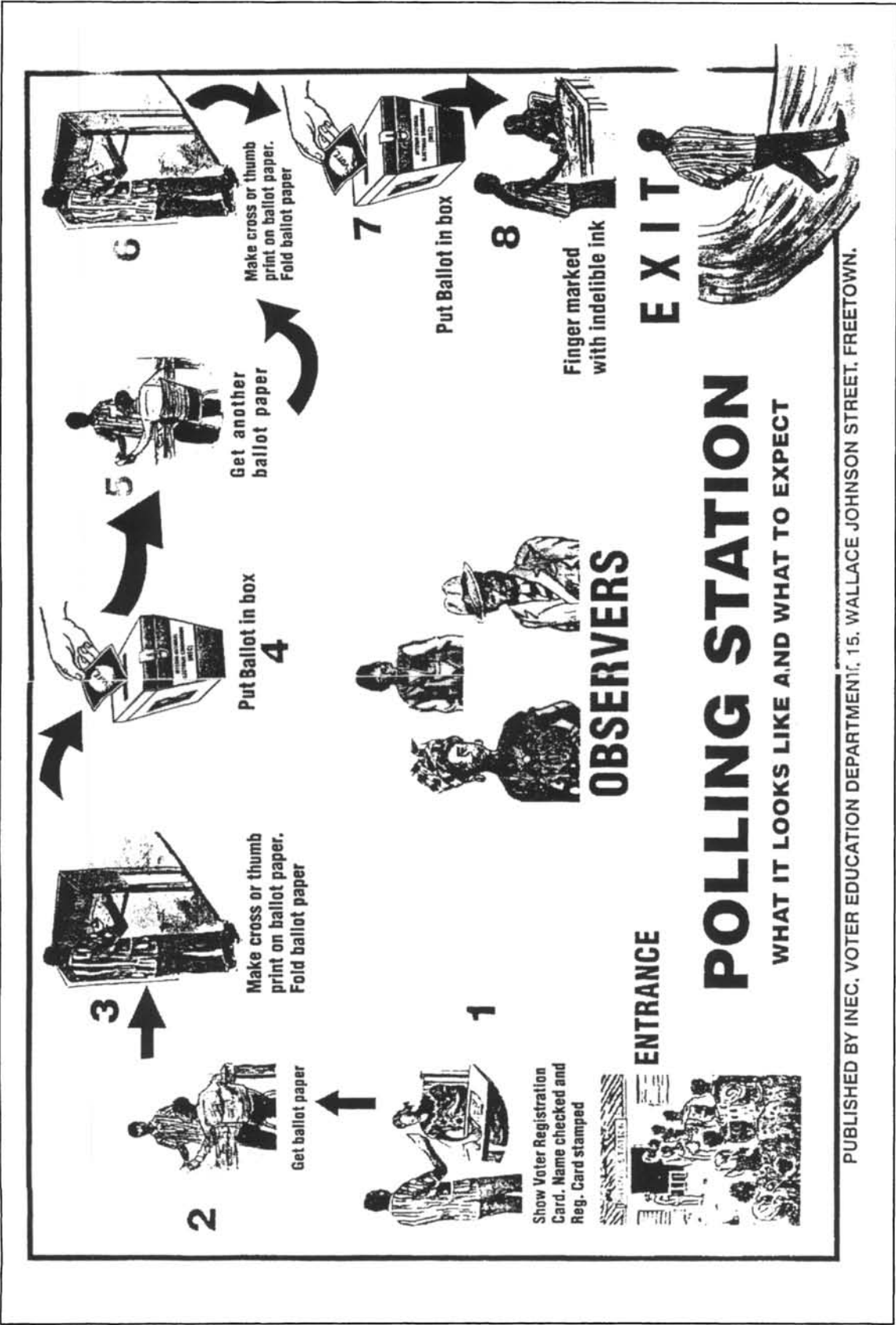
**PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTIONS**
(Vote for
Candidate)



**V
O
T
I
N
G**

**PARLIAMENTARY
ELECTION**
(Vote for Party)





*ANNEX XIII***Statement by the Joint International Observer Group, 29 February 1996****STATEMENT****THE JOINT INTERNATIONAL OBSERVER GROUP
SIERRA LEONE**

The Joint International Observer Group (JIOG), under the auspices of the United Nations Electoral Assistance Secretariat, fielded a total of 65 international observers to the national presidential and parliamentary elections in Sierra Leone on February 26 and 27, 1996. The observer teams included the African-American Institute, the African American Labor Center, the Commonwealth Trade Union Council, some members of the diplomatic community accredited to Sierra Leone, the Organization of African Unity, the United Kingdom, the United Nations, and the World Council of Churches.

In the weeks before the elections, some JIOG members observed the election preparations and campaign activities throughout the accessible areas of the country. Although the security situation hindered the registration process, the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the political parties strove valiantly to promote the democratic process in order to enable the Sierra Leonean people to express their will. On election day and the subsequent extension on February 27, team members observed the polls and, where possible, the count, in the following districts: Western Area (including Freetown), Bo, Bombali, Kenema, Koinadugu, Port Loko, and Kono.

In general, the JIOG was impressed with the overwhelming desire on the part of the people of Sierra Leone to exercise their democratic rights in casting a ballot for the parties and candidates of their choice, marking a return to a multi-party system. The people of Sierra Leone were determined to exercise their rights as citizens despite attempts at intimidation by armed elements, witnessed by some observers in Freetown, Bo, Kenema, and Makeni. These violent incidents did not deter the will of the people to continue the elections.