READING COMPREHENSION TEST # 10
"UNMIL POLICE AND ELECTIONS"

A few days before polling began the otherwise ubiquitous red and white cars of UN Police had suddenly disappeared from the streets of Monrovia. I called our UNPOL contact Tawfique Chowdhury, a UN Police officer from Bangladesh, and he said "I am off to Zwedru". It was the same case with many others. Like migratory birds, most UNPOL officers had fled Monrovia starting 6 October, 2005, five days before the D-day. In all, 380 UN Police officers fanned out to various corners of Liberia to join their colleagues in overseeing the law and order aspect of elections 2005. Their mere presence in the hinterlands days ahead of the polls reassured the people with a sense of security.

They were to assist by advising and mentoring the Liberian National Police (LNP) and other national security services officers deployed all over the country. A day before UNPOL officers started moving, about 4,000 officers mainly from the LNP (2,487), Immigration (787) and other security Agencies left for various destinations in distant corners of Liberia. The LNP Acting Inspector General, Joseph Kekula told a gathering of presspersons a day before their departure that they were ready for the Election Day. While most of the Police left by road, some left by helicopters. One batch of LNP officers also left by sea in the 'Catarina', headed for Buchanan and Harper. A UN Police officer was quoted as saying that UNPOL will basically be watching the polling precincts from a distance, making sure the LNP are at their post and advising them whenever necessary.

The actual policing was to be done by the LNP. For many of them it was their first exposure to elections and hence the need for assistance. In cases where the LNP did not have the necessary communication and transport equipment the UN Police provided support. The Formed Police Units (FPU) were also deployed to sensitive areas like Ganta, Zwedru, Harper and Buchanan to back up the unarmed UNPOL and LNP officers. According to the UNPOL Commissioner, Mohammed Alhassan, these areas are hotspots and identified as strategic areas to expand Police presence. The UN Police also coordinated with the military for logistical support in certain places. For instance, many cases, officers stayed with the military. In many instances the military also facilitated transportation of LNP and other security forces.

To coordinate security at a national level on polling day, the UNPOL also set up a nodal Joint Operations Centre at the LNP headquarters in Monrovia. According to Commissioner Alhassan, this centre coordinated communication from all Agencies including the military. The Ops Room at the centre monitored the security situation all over the country on elections day.

It was not until 4-5 days after the election that the UN Police officers were back to Monrovia.

Much of the credit for the largely incident free election goes to the UN Police in UNMIL and of course, the LNP and security forces, who kept vigil at each and every polling station across the country until the last ballot was dropped into the box.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

QUESTIONS: READING TEST # 10 "A"
"UNMIL POLICE AND ELECTIONS 2005"

Q1: Where was officer Tawfique Chowdhury deployed for the elections?

Q2: What was the starting date for UNPOL officers leaving Monrovia?

Q3: On what day were the elections held?

Q4: How many LNP officers were deployed out of Monrovia?

Q5: One batch of LNP left by sea. What is the name of the vessel with which they traveled and what was their destination?

Q6: Who did the actual policing during elections?

Q7: Why was a nodal Joint Operations centre set up in the LNP Headquarters?

Q8. What was the responsibility of Ops Room in the Joint Operations centre on elections day?

Q9. When did the UNPOL officers return to Monrovia?

Q10: Name the towns that were identified as sensitive areas.

LIVEWORKSHEETS