

To John Myers for BK Committee Members, O.W.L. Members.

From: Moussa Conteh.

MESSAGE:

I arrived in Freetown yesterday afternoon by road from Bo. I used the alternate route through Moyamba. They say it is shorter by at 7 miles, it is relatively safer than the Mile 91 and Mile 47 route which is the main road. A lot of the recent battles have just little north Mile 47. Having said that I have met people who also travelled to Freetown yesterday using the main Mile 91 and Mile 47 route, only they said there were lots of troop presence at Mile 47.

Freetown is functioning normally - people on the roads carrying on their daily activities, some main road are being surfaced, the Methodist Church is on etc.

I am staying in Freetown until I can make arrangements for my luggage to be taken to Bo. From when I cleared them from the docks in early March they have been sitting in one empty container and the Methodist Church store. First the big Church lorry broke down and just after they repaired it the roads became a bit unsafe, then trouble erupted in May. Now the road is safer I want to press for my luggage to be taken up to Bo.

I wrote this report as an update for the BK and O.W.L. Committee members. It reads:

Dear Friends,

I am writing this letter for a friend, Chris Eddy, to take and post in the UK.

I am writing to bring you up to date with news about Sierra Leone and the progress BK is making. As I write the light is on, it has been off for the past 3 days. It came on last night and stayed on right through the night. I hope it does not go out before I complete this letter! (It did. The unpredictability of things makes life more challenging, frustrating, refreshing and interesting here. I have to accept though such situations do hold up people who are busy and want to do something. One survival rule I have learnt here is to programme your computer to save documents every 2 minutes).

I am sure Sierra Leone has been in the world news for the recent rebel step up of their war against the people. Bo has been unscathed by the fighting. The road was closed for a few days after which normal traffic continued to flow between Freetown and Bo. The road to Kenema from Bo stayed open all the time.

There is fuel, food, the market is functioning, people bring their produce to Bo and buy what they want and return to their villages in the afternoon. The fighting has been restricted to the North where there has been some amount of traditional support for the rebels, and the South East where the diamonds are.

The commitment of the British Government, the new resolve of the UN Troops, and the dogged determination of Sierra Leoneans has helped turn the tide against the rebels. People after the recent

abduction of the UN Peace Keepers are skeptical of their presence, mandate and ability. The Peace Keepers are working hard to win back peoples confidence.

I am still adjusting to life in Sierra Leone. There is only one small Bank in Bo, the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank, but along the Bank are cartels that transact money business. I feed on both as when necessary. The national currency, the Leone seems to be appreciating but the effects of that appreciation is not being felt in the shops and the market. The exchange rate when I checked yesterday was Le 2050 to the British pound.

I have managed to set up a working office in Bo and in Freetown, although they are working under capacity. Michael Moss asked me to tell you he is very willing to play the role of courier!

The Liaison Office is in place and will play the same role as Michael. Michael is going up to work at Bunumbu Press. He and I will alternate travelling to Freetown.

I am in the process of installing the phone line that runs into the Liaison Office. I have to look for technician to do it.

I am also trying to organise the transportation of my luggage from Freetown to Bo. They have been sitting here in Freetown since I cleared them from the Docks in Freetown. The problem has been alternating between looking for spare parts to do some major maintenance on the Methodist Church lorry and insecurity of the roads following the May rebel incidence in Freetown. When my luggage arrived at the Docks in Freetown the Customs Authorities wanted to inspect them and after the inspection they just threw the things back into the contact in a very disorganised way. We took the things to the Methodist Church Compound on Kingharman Road. We had to transfer the luggage from the Customs container to a container I had been offered by the Church. As we were doing this a large crowd of youths descended on us and they were bent on looting anything they could lay hands on. We managed to secure most of the stuff, thanks to Michael Moss and few colleagues who work for the Church. So everything is in disorder. I have managed to set up one computer in Bo, that is up and running. I have managed to locate one computer and screen for the Freetown Office. We use a friends keyboard and Michael Moss' printer. I am looking forward to receiving my luggage in Bo so I can sort things out. The fax/phone is in the luggage jumble!

I have managed to put together a **Games & Sports Committee** to help run the affairs of BK. I have invested the Committee with enough powers to take up full responsibility for BK. I do not want it to be a "Moussa Conteh" affair. I am a member of the committee but with only one vote!

The Board is still to be formed.

The Committee has just recently organised the first BK sporting activity - a mini marathon. It was a huge success. We put in our very best to ensure our first activity made a positive impact, and it did. We now want to do the same activity every year. Probably next year we want to invite Kenema, Freetown and Makeni to take part.

The report is below this letter. I am trying to establish a reliable local funding base for BK's activities. I am trying to run after the operational NGOs/Aid Agencies in Freetown and Bo for substantial funding. The recent spate of fighting has not helped BK's efforts to establish itself but we will persevere.

The staff I have in place now are:

Attore Carboh	-	Liaison Officer
Wusu Sannoh	-	Assistant Co-ordinator
Sylvester Kallon	-	Administrative Officer
Joseph Ndaloma	-	Driver

The friend I had in mind for the Assisant Co-ordinator post, Charles Hubbard, could not join me because he found alternative employment. When we start playing tennis he may likely give us his sevices. I am very pleased and satisfied with the performance of the staff I have. Their full employment will have to be approved by the Board when it is set up.

The story of my tipper is still rolling on. I bought the tipper in 1992 as a private investment for when returned to Sierra Leone. The tipper is an ex MOD vehicle. After the rebel attack on Freetown in January 1999 the UN placed an arms embargo on Sierra Leone. When I tried to ship the tipper out to Sierra Leone in February 2000 it got seized a the Tilbury Docks. I have made an appeal and the matter is with the Dti to consider to issue me an export licence.

I am here and I am here to stay to establish BK. There is no threat to my life and activities. I have managed to establish a presence here and would like stay.

Thanks for all your support without which BK would have come this far. Please extend my gratitude to the youth who want to do some fundraising to support BK. We took some pictures of the mini marathon race. I will send some of them to you when next I see someone coming to the UK.

In the not too distant future I would like to e-mail all these to you!

If no satisfactory progress has been made about my tipper vehicle I would like to come over in early January to see if I can sort it out.

I will stay in touch.

Your friend,

Moussa Conteh.

NARRATIVE REPORT OF THE BO KOLSEUM FIRST 'MINI MARATHON EVENT.

This was the first of its kind to be held in Bo. We have made plans to run this event every year! It drew lots of people to the streets to cheer the runners as they came past.

A lot of work was done in preparation for this event. There was no blue print to look at. We were quite nervous especially as the date for the event drew near.

The Games & Sports Committee discussed every point from the concept of the event, down to the final details of the route. We measured two routes - one for the men and the other for the women. The route for the men was **14.6 km** and the route for the women was **8 km**.

We got permits from UNAMSIL, the Police and Civil Defence Force, (the Kamajors). We got support from the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, the Medical Research Centre, One World Link, the local radio station, KISS 104 FM and some local donors.

The day was set for **Saturday, 10th. June 2000**. The race was to start at 8am but we pushed the starting time to 9am because of a heavy downpour of rain. The morning was promising with bright sunshine. Gradually the sky turned heavy with rain clouds. We wished it away but it stayed and from it came the down pour. It was good for the athletes we were worried about the judges being at their checkpoints. The athletes spent time warming up for the start of the event. We had 3 vehicles covering the routes - Red Cross, the BK Landrover, and the MRC Ambulance. The radio station covered the event from start to finish. At the Coronation Field where the races finished the radio station did a live coverage.

A happy band of cyclists with their horns blaring voluntarily rode ahead of the runners. The event was run in a shorter time than we expected. Most of the athletes had spare energy and they could have given us a 'lap of honour'.

Our next focus is football and volley ball. Now we have a good reputation the activities of BK will take off well.

BK 'MINI MARATHON**FINANCIAL STATEMENT.****CASH INCOME:**

Rodney Michael	Le 150,000
Francess Fortune	Le 150,000
Mike Downham	Le 100,000
Alhaji Mohamed Shuman	Le 25,000
Haji Fawaz	Le 50,000
A. W. Jarret	Le 25,000
Black & White	Le 20,000
Shaway Gem Centre	Le 75,000
BK	Le 290,000
Pius George	A crate of soft drinks
Total	Le 885,000

EXPENDITURE:

Cash Prizes	Le 290,000
Article Prizes	Le 80,000
Publicity	Le 195,000
Stationery	Le 14,000
Fuel	Le 86,000
Refreshments	Le 65,000
Tips	Le 25,000
Security	Le 6,000
Misc. Exp.	Le 124,000**
Total	Le 885,000

Misc. Exp. Breakdown:

Pictures	Le 102,500
Batteries	Le 6,000 (Megaphone)
Safety Pins	Le 5,500 (attaching numbers to runners vests)
Plastic bags	Le 10,000 (holding water at checkpoint for runners)

Dear.....,

This is formal letter from the **Games & Sports Committee** to thank you for the donation you made towards the Bo Koloseum 'Mini Marathon' held on Saturday, the 10th. of June.

I am attaching a narrative and financial report for the event.

The 'Mini Marathon' event is only the first in a series of sporting activities that is going to staged in Bo for the youth up to March 2001. We plan to hold the first trophy, medals, and certificates presentation at the Bo Town Hall on **Friday, the 27th. of April 2001.** Every year after 2001 we have a committment to host the same activities and presentation to honour our youth. We strongly believe that by honouring our youth they will value themselves and learn to respect others in the community in which they live.

We hope you will come along with us, and encourage your friends and various contacts, to give us a helping hand to forge a harmonious community.

Once again thank you for your initial support.

Yours Sincerely,

Moussa Conteh
Cordinator

(This is the letter I sent out to our sponsors)