



## **ELECTORAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY UPDATE FOR WEEK ENDING 25TH FEBRUARY, 2023**

**D**ear reader:

We are pleased to present the 2<sup>nd</sup> weekly update for the week ending, 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2023. These updates are part of electoral justice and security projects currently implemented by CARL and funded by the Government of Ireland and OSIWA. The projects are aimed at promoting effective administration of electoral justice as well accountability for human rights violations and electoral offences before, during and after the 2023 elections. As part of this initiative, CARL-SL has hired and assigned Monitors across the 16 districts of the country. Their main responsibility is to keep tabs on critical election-related incidents/developments, including petitions, lower level elections and conventions for the election of party executives, politically-motivated violence and human rights abuses, among others.

During the week under review, the following developments/incidents were observed/reported:

Freetown/nationwide:

### **A. MAIN OPPOSITION APC ELECTS SAMURA KAMARA AS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE FOR 2023 ELECTIONS**

On February 18-20, 2023, the main opposition All People's Congress held its National Delegates Conference and elected Dr. Samura Kamara as its flagbearer for the June, 2023 Presidential election. Following his election, the APC sought and received police clearance to welcome their flagbearer by organizing street procession in Freetown and its environs on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2023. In the course of the procession, it is reported the party's supporters sang and danced to vulgar and offensive songs targeted at members of the ruling SLPP.

In response to such behavior,

the Political Parties Regulation Commission, in a letter addressed to the Secretary General of the APC has imposed a fine Nle120,000/- (One hundred and twenty thousand New Leones (approximately \$6,000) for peddling "public insults and provocation against its opponents".

**During the procession, it is reported** that there were clashes between supporters of the APC and the ruling SLPP around the Calabatown, Freetown. Some supporters of SLPP reportedly assembled at an outlet called "Unity Ataya Base", singing and dancing to songs complimentary about their own party, thereby provoking skirmishes between them and

APC supporters. A statement from the Political Parties Regulation Commission (PPRC) said their action disrupted the activities of the APC, which culminated in a "breach of the public peace". This reportedly led to the discharge of tear-gas by the police to disperse the crowd.

In a letter to the Secretary General of the SLPP, the PPRC warned the SLPP as to the future conduct of their supporters.

**The Sierra Leone Police has,** however, launched a comprehensive investigation into the alleged incidents of violence and use of offensive language and hate speech with the view of identifying perpetrators and bringing them to justice.

**The National Secretary General of the APC,** Lansana Dumbuya ESQ, has claimed that he

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was beaten up by Presidential guards whilst participating in the welcome parade of his party's flagbearer. On AYV, that same day, the Mayor of Freetown City Council, Yvonne Aki-Sawyer also claimed that her driver was

beaten up and that her laptop was also taken from the vehicle. The Minister of Information and communication, Mr. Mohamed Rahman Swarray, has rejected the claims, stating that they lack merit.

However, by a letter dated 23rd February 2023, the PPRC wrote a letter to the Inspector General of Police urging the police to speedily investigate the claims of physical attacks on members/supporters of the All Peoples Congress Party and to take actions against the perpetrators, if substantiated.

## **B. DR. SAMURA KAMARA AND OTHERS HAVE A CASE TO ANSWER BEFORE AN ANTI-CORRUPTION COURT IN FREETOWN**

Justice Adrian Fisher has ruled that Dr. Samura Kamara and his co-accused have “a case to answer” in respect of their ongoing trial for misappropriation of public funds, abuse of office, among other corruption-related offences. Lawyers representing Saidu Nallo, Foday Vahfomba Bawoh, Adikali F. Suma, Samura M.W. Kamara, Kandeh F.B Kamara & Jules S. Davis unsuccessfully applied for an order to dismiss the allegations against their clients, stating that the prosecution's case had no merit. The matter was adjourned

to 17th March, 2023, when the accused will be expected to open their defence.

## **C. THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL SECURITY (ONS) ENGAGES STAKEHOLDERS**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2023, the Office of National Security (ONS) held a stakeholders' engagement to discuss the security implications for the use of obnoxious materials or messages in furthering social and political objectives. The ONS said they are concerned about the growing use of diatribes, invectives and vitriolic messages from political party ac-

tors and their agents. According to the National Security Coordinator, these vitriolic messages are threats to peace and cohesion and a recipe for chaos.

Speaking at the event, the PPRC chairperson warned that his Commission will invoke its powers under the new law fearlessly, dispassionately and without any hesitation. Other speakers blamed the rising incidence of hate speech on the lack of action by security and law enforcement agencies. The President of the entertainment industry, Kao Denero, used the forum to appeal to the entertainment industry to refrain from using insults as a political tool.

## **D. MAC-P WILL BE INVOKED BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE ELECTIONS**

The National Security Coordinator has announced that MAC-P will be in force before, during and after the June, 2023 elections. Speaking at a stakeholders' engagement forum in Freetown, Mr. Caulker said it was part of the plan to maintain law and order, adding that the country's security level may be raised depending on the behaviour or conduct of the public.

## **E. ECSL CONTINUES TO ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY**

The Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone (ECSL) has organized a number of public outreach events in major towns and cities as part of its efforts to raise awareness and deepen knowledge about the electoral process, particularly the PR District Block system.

## **F. SECURITY UPDATE**

With the exception of the Western Area Urban, where there were clashes between supporters of ruling political party and the opposition APC, our monitors reported no incidents of violence in other parts of the country.