

ELECTORAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY UPDATE FOR WEEK ENDING 18TH MARCH, 2023

Dear readers;

We are pleased to present the 5th weekly update for the week ending 18th March, 2023. These updates are part of the 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. CARL-SL will also use these updates to guide its public engagement and advocacy interventions.

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

Freetown/nationwide:

CSOs CALL FOR BROAD-BASED PARTICIPATION IN THE NOMINATION OF PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES AND A REDUCTION IN THE ELECTORAL THRESHOLD

A consortium of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including the Centre for Accountability and the Rule of Law (CARL), 50/50 Group, Institute of Governance Reform (IGR) and Send Sierra Leone, have urged the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone and the Sierra Leone Parliament to reduce the electoral threshold for a parliamentary seat from 11.9% to 7%. In a press release dated 14th March, 2023,

the consortium said the current threshold of 11.9% could undermine efforts to enhance an inclusive and broad-based representation, which is at the core of a Proportional Representation System. In order to ensure that the next parliament is composed of at least 30% of women, the consortium also recommended that the first of every three candidates on a list should be a woman. Finally, the consortium also called for broad-

based participation in the nomination of parliamentary candidates by, among other ways, organizing lower level elections.

DR. SAMURA KAMARA ANNOUNCES RUNNING MATE

The Presidential candidate of the opposition All Peoples Congress (APC), Dr. Samura M.W. Kamara, on the 13th March, 2023 announced that Honorable Chernor Maju Bah (Chericoco) will be his running mate for the 2023 Presidential elections.

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Honorable Chernor Maju Bah (Chericoco) is the current Minority Leader in Parliament and was Dr. Samura Kamara's running mate in the 2018 Presidential election.

Hon. Komboh Kamara has also been endorsed by the APC as its National Campaign Chairman for the forthcoming elections.

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION SIERRA LEONE POSTPONES THE DISTRIBUTION OF VOTER ID CARDS.

The Electoral Commission Sierra Leone (ECSL) has postponed the distribution of Voter Registration Cards to the 17th – 26th March, 2023. According to the release, the deferral was as a result of the delay in air freighting of the voter registration cards. The distribution of the voter registration cards was scheduled to have started on 17th March, 2023.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION SIERRA LEONE (ECSL) HOLDS POLITICAL PARTIES LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETINGS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone (ECSL) on the 15th March, 2023 held inclusive district inaugural Political Parties Liaison Committee (PPLC) meetings in various districts across the country. The meeting was attended by representatives of various political parties, the Political Parties Regulations Commission (PPRC), civil society, security agencies, among others. The Electoral Commission Sierra Leone (ECSL) provided an update about its activities, including progress and challenges.

ONS CONDUCTS A DAY-LONG TRAINING FOR SECURITY PERSONNEL IN BOMBALI

The Office of National Security (ONS) has conducted a day-long training for key security agencies, including the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), and the Sierra Leone Correctional Services (SLCS). The training was intended to prepare the security sector to effectively prevent and/or manage public order issues before, during and after the elections.

SECURITY UPDATE

The week under review has been generally peaceful, and our monitors recorded no form of election-related violence in any part of the country.