



Key dates for 2007:

- **Feb. 26 - Mar. 18:**
Voter Registration Period
- **April:**
Arrival of the NDI Long-term International Observation Delegation
- **May 21-25:**
Exhibition of Provisional Voters' Register
- **May 28-29:**
Inquiry Process
- **Jun. 25:**
Dissolution of Parliament
- **Jul. 2-9:**
Nominations for President and Parliament Candidates
- **Jul. 10 - Aug. 9:**
Campaign Period
- **Aug. 11:**
Election Day

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The Sierra Leone Elections Story Unfolds

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) conducted a voter registration exercise in March giving eligible citizens of Sierra Leone the opportunity to register for the 2007 national elections. Following registration, the Provisional Voters Register (PVR) was made available for public viewing during the exhibition period running from 21-25 May. The exhibition allowed registered voters to confirm that their names appear on the PVR, correct their details, if necessary, and to object and challenge names listed on the PVR. The exhibition process will result in the Final Voters Register (FVR) published by the NEC.

The next step in the electoral process is nomination of presidential and parliamentary candidates by political parties and independent candidates from 2-7 July. During the period of submission, the NEC Returning Officer from each district will receive nomina-

tions for parliamentary candidates. Nominations for presidential candidates will be processed at the NEC Headquarters in Freetown. Teams of NEC officials will check the nomination documents for accuracy and make any necessary corrections before they are provisionally accepted pending objections. Once any objections are reviewed and decided upon, the candidates will receive final confirmation of their nomination.

On 11 August, registered voters in Sierra Leone will vote for President and Vice President and for Members of Parliament for a term of five years.

In the election for President and Vice President, the candidates will be declared elected if he/she gains 55% or more of the valid votes cast. If no candidate obtains such a majority of the vote, a second ballot shall be conducted, between the top two Presidential candidates. The majority

winner of the second round will be declared the winner. Only individuals who are members of a registered political party and nominated by a party can contest the presidential election.

In the parliamentary election, 112 ordinary Members of Parliament shall be elected – one from each constituency. Elections for parliament are based on simple majority, meaning the candidate who obtains the highest number of valid votes cast in the constituency is elected. Candidates for parliament can be nominated by a registered party or stand as independent candidates. A person can only be nominated in one constituency, and each party can only nominate one person per constituency.

In addition to the 112 Members of Parliament, 12 Paramount Chief Representatives will be elected in a third poll to parliament.

Presidential and Parliamentary Nomination Process Ongoing

The NEC has spent several weeks preparing for the presidential and parliamentary nominations process, which runs from 2-14 July 2007. Although only one day is provided for the submission of nomination papers, the NEC has pointed to Section 126 of the 2002 Electoral Laws Act to extend the submission period for nomination papers to 5 days. The process is staggered, with submission of parliamentary candidate papers taking place from 2-6 July and submission of presidential candidate papers from 3-7 July.

Objections for presidential candidates can only be lodged with the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has thirty days to give a decision on the presidential objections. Citizens can lodge objections for parliamentary candidates with the district electoral officer and appeals with the NEC headquarters. If their response does not satisfy the objector, he or she can take the matter to the Elections Petition Court, but only after the elections.

Dr. Christiana A.M. Thorpe, the Chief Electoral Commissioner (CEC) and Chairperson of NEC, will serve as the Returning Officer for presidential candidate nomination process while the District Electoral Officers (DEOs) will serve as returning officers for parliamentary candidate nominations in the districts. Parties will submit nomination papers for presidential candidates to NEC Headquarters and for parliamentary candidates at the specific district electoral office.

As presidential candidates in Sierra Leone traditionally bring along their supporters when submitting their nomination papers, the NEC has devised a system wherein each candidate will arrive at an allotted time. In order to decrease the potential for violence between candidate supporters, the NEC performed a drawing among the parties and candidates to determine when they will be expected to come to the NEC. For parliamentary candidates, nomination will take place on

“first come, first served” basis.

On 28 June, the Political Party Liaison Committee (PPLC) held a special meeting, to which they invited National Chairpersons / Secretary Generals of all registered political parties in Sierra Leone. At the meeting, the parties signed their approval of the sample ballot paper.

Another activity related to the nomination process is the submission of the financial disclosures forms to the PPRC. In order to limit the influence of money in the political process, the Constitution of Sierra Leone and the Political Parties Act (2002) give the PPRC the authority to implement financial reporting requirements that will increase the transparency of political finance. Candidates standing for presidential and parliamentary elections are required to submit complete information on their assets and liabilities. The PPRC asked the NEC for its assistance in distributing the Liabilities and Asset forms along with the Nomination forms.

NEC Announces Results from the Exhibition of the Provisional Voters' Register and Challenges Period

The NEC completed the exhibition of the Provisional Voters' Register (PVR) and challenges period at the end of May.

The exhibition process allowed registered voters to confirm their names on the voters list and correct any mistakes, if necessary. Voters were also given the opportunity to object to names on the list for reasons such as death, lunacy, or non-citizenship as well as petition for inclusion if they could prove registration but their names failed to appear on the PVR. The exhibition period ran from 21-25 May and the challenges and inquiry process from 28-30 May.

The national turnout rate for the exhibition period was approximately 35%. The total percentage of corrections was 1.93% and of inclusions 0.24%. The total number of objections nationwide was less than 30 and thus negligible compared to the 906,635 total names confirmed from the 2,619,397 total valid names on the PVR.

The turnout rate in the districts ran the gambit from a high of 77.14% in Pujehun to a low of 13.37% in the Western Urban area, which encompasses the capital of Freetown. The southern region had the highest turnout with 48.7%, followed by the east with 45.7%, the north with 35.4%, and the west with 15.5%. Please see the chart at right for a complete percentage breakdown of Sierra Leone's 14 districts.

Name of District	Valid Voters	Percent of Names on
EAST:		
Kailahun	182,896	59.06
Kenema	270,989	40.16
Kono	180,305	37.78
NORTH:		
Bombali	205,788	42.60
Kambia	134,742	23.24
Koinadugu	119,407	40.62
Port Loko	216,655	25.83
Tonkolili	169,451	44.44
SOUTH:		
Bo	240,422	35.00
Bonthe	73,591	48.36
Moyamba	121,442	34.15
Pujehun	98,473	77.14
WEST:		
Western Rural	113,353	17.62
Western Urban	491,883	13.37
TOTAL	2,619,397	34.61

NDI Deploys Election Observers to Cover National Polls

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) has deployed four teams of international observers to the regional capitals of Sierra Leone in Freetown, Bo, Kenema, and Makeni to provide national coverage for the presidential and parliamentary elections on 11 August. The nine long-term observers (LTOs) conduct their

activities in a nonpartisan manner in accordance with Sierra Leonean law, the National Electoral Commission's Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Observers, and international standards for election monitoring set forth in the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation.

negro, Slovakia, Nigeria, and the United States. The mission is sponsored by the British Department for International Development (DFID) and will be deployed until the completion of the national electoral process.

Since their initial deployment in April 2007, the LTO teams have met with national, regional, district, and local stakeholders in districts throughout the country. They established contacts with the National Electoral Commission (NEC), political parties, Sierra Leone Police (SLP), district and city councils, traditional and religious leaders, and civil society groups, among others.

The LTO teams observed the exhibition of the voters list and inquiry period from 21-29 May and are now preparing to monitor the nomination of parliamentary candidates from 2-7 July. The next phases involve the campaign period from 10 July to 9 August and the polling day on 11 August. In August, the LTOs will be joined by a team of approximately 30 short-term observers (STOs) to monitor the electoral environment before, during, and after the national elections.

The presence of the LTOs also demonstrates the international community's interest in and support for the development of democratic governance and the conduct of multiparty elections in Sierra Leone.

The LTO team consists of experienced political and civic leaders as well as election experts from Senegal, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Uganda, Monte-



NDI team of long term observers and staff in Freetown preparing for deployment to the four regions of Sierra Leone.

Southern Region Office of the Political Parties Registration Commission Opens in Bo City

In May, officials opened regional offices of the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) in Kenema, Bo, Makeni, and Freetown. Officials opened the PPRC's Southern Region office in Bo City on 29 May. National, regional, and international officials attending the ceremony included PPRC Commissioner R.A. Caesar from Freetown, a spokesman for Paramount Chief Rashid Kamanda Bongay IV of Kakua chiefdom, and USAID Country Director Christine Sheckler. Other stakeholders included IFES, NDI, political parties, civil society groups, and representatives from the media.

At the ceremony in Bo, Commissioner Caesar welcomed the assembled group by telling them how the PPRC institution is unique among the world's electoral systems and that those involved should be proud and nurture the important body with strong support. The spokesman for the paramount chief commented on the importance of chiefs practicing neutrality in the political process and on the commitment of Chief Bongay IV to promote peaceful elections and avoid conflict between political parties.

USAID Director Ms. Sheckler emphasized the critical role of the PPRC to enforce the Political Parties Code of Conduct for the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections. She also reiterated the commitment of USAID to provide technical and financial assistance for the regional offices of PPRC and its staff. She recognized the help of IFES and NDI in working with the political parties and

grassroots organizations in promoting peaceful and credible elections.

At the end of ceremony, the PPRC officially appointed Southern Region Officer Jenneh Smith to her position, and Commissioner Caesar and Ms. Sheckler presented her with the keys to the new office.

Expressing gratitude to the donors

and participants, Ms. Smith emphasized that she will act on facts and findings based on written submissions and not on rumor, hearsay, or verbal complaints by political parties. She encouraged all the political parties to cooperate in this process, as they are the main stakeholders benefiting from the impartial and important work of her office.



PPRC Southern Region Officer Jenneh Smith receives keys to the Bo City office from PPRC Commissioner R.A. Caesar and USAID Country Director Christine Sheckler.

The Political Parties Registration Commission of Sierra Leone

In order to participate in the election, political parties must register with the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) whose mandate is defined by the 1991 Constitution and the 2002 Political Parties Act. Justice Sydney Warner was nominated as PPRC Chairman by President Kabbah in November 2006 and confirmed by Parliament.

The PPRC monitors compliance with the Political Parties Code of Conduct, mediates any disputes between political parties, sensitizes paramount chiefs on their role in ensuring smooth elections, and encourages parties to promote the participation of women in the electoral process. The PPRC initiated its work for the first time in 2005, when the commission was launched in advance of the 2007 national elections.

In November 2006, the PPRC developed a Political Parties Code of Conduct to guide election behavior, which all registered political parties have signed.

Following adoption of the Code of Conduct, the PPRC established District Monitoring Committees (DMCs) throughout the country "to be a forum for discussion of issues of common concern, including breaches of the Code before, during, and after the elections." The goal of the DMCs is to prepare for and promote constructive, free and fair, and peaceful elections in Sierra Leone in 2007. In particular, the committees are focusing on monitoring the Code of Conduct, providing early warning of possible conflicts, and promoting conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution.

The DMCs are also charged with

sharing election-related information to the participating stakeholders, including sensitizing local communities and traditional leaders on the mandate of the PPRC and details of the Code of Conduct. The PPRC and its DMCs are dedicated to holding of peaceful, free, and fair elections in Sierra Leone and promoting political tolerance. They are responsible for ensuring that the leaders, candidates, members, agents, supporters, and representatives of all political parties adhere to the Code.

The PPRC is an important forum for expressing grievances and maintaining communication between political parties, government agencies, and civil society. The UNIOSIL, UNDP, USAID, and IFES provided the initial technical and financial assistance to the PPRC.

Nomination Procedures for Candidates

Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates:

Parliamentary Candidates:

Period and Place of Submission

Dates of Submission: 3-7 July 2007
 Returning Officer: Chief Electoral Commissioner
 Place of Submission: NEC Headquarters

Eligibility Criteria

Presidential candidates must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- must be a member of a political party;
- must be nominated by a political party;
- must be a citizen of Sierra Leone;
- must not be less than forty years of age;
- must be a registered elector; and
- must be otherwise qualified to be elected as a Member of Parliament.

Objections and Appeals

Any Sierra Leonean citizen has the right to object to the nomination of a presidential candidate. Objections should be filed within seven days of the publication of the provisional list of presidential candidates. Objections are handled by the Supreme Court, which shall give a decision within thirty days of the objection being lodged.

Period and Place of Submission

Dates of Submission: 2-6 July 2007
 Returning Officers: District Electoral Officers
 Place of Nomination: District Electoral Offices

Eligibility Criteria

Parliamentary candidates must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- must be a citizen of Sierra Leone (not a naturalized citizen);
- must not be less than twenty one years of age;
- must be a registered voter;
- must be able to speak and read the English language "with a degree of proficiency sufficient to enable him to take an active part in the proceedings of Parliament;" and
- all those paid from the Consolidated Fund, ministerial employees, civil servant, or teachers employed by state-funded schools are excluded from standing as a candidate unless they have resigned from the post 12 months prior to the Election Day.

Nomination Steps

Submission of the candidacy at the nomination place:

- every candidate shall be nominated by three electors of the electoral area (constituency) for which she/he is candidate; and
- every candidate must present a check list, submission forms, signed Code of Campaign Ethic, valid voters registration card, nomination fee deposit in the amount of 100,000 Leones (refundable if candidate receives 10% of valid votes in the constituency or in the case of his/her death).

Objection and Appeals

Any voter in the electoral area (constituency) in question may file an objection to the nomination of a parliamentary candidate. Objections must be filed in person with the NEC Returning Officer in the district. The Returning Officer shall decide on the objection no later than 7 July 2007. Any candidate not satisfied with the decision has the right to appeal to the NEC Headquarters in Freetown no later than 8 July 2007. The NEC will give a decision by no later than 9 July 2007 on any appeals received.

NDI in Sierra Leone

As the July 2007 presidential and legislative elections approach, NDI is working with civil society, political parties, and other stakeholders to enhance the prospects for a transparent, peaceful, and free electoral process. Through its programming NDI works to ensure that traditionally marginalized populations, including women, youth, and disabled persons, are included in the elections process.

As part of its efforts to enhance the capacity of civil society and support the elections process, NDI is partnering with Sierra Leonean organizations to conduct voter education campaigns.

NDI is incorporating peace-building and conflict prevention programming into its work with political parties and civil society. The Institute is partnering with Democracy Sierra Leone (DSL) to conduct a series of workshops on conflict mitigation in Sierra Leone's 14 districts and 112 electoral constituencies. The program utilizes the "Pause, Assess, Listen, and Solve" or "PALS" approach to conflict prevention and peaceful coexistence. In conjunction with election authorities including the PPRC, NDI is supporting parties by providing technical assistance during the party registration process, training parties to monitor the polls, and ensuring compliance with the Code of Conduct.

With the overall goal of enhancing prospects for genuine and transparent elections in Sierra Leone, NDI is conducting an extensive election observation program that includes long and short-term international observers as well as technical and financial assistance to the National Elections Watch (NEW), a coalition of civil society organizations observing the process.

Additional information on NDI's programming in Sierra Leone can be found at: <http://www.ndi.org/worldwide/cewa/sierraleone/sierraleone.asp>.



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In Brief

NEC Training for Political Party Leaders in Makeni Prior to the Nominations Process

On 18 June, the NEC Regional Office in Makeni conducted a preliminary briefing to local party leaders regarding the parliamentary nominations process slated for 2-6 July. The Northern Regional Commissioner instructed party leaders to cooperate with NEC and each other, and encouraged parties to adhere to a process that will result in peaceful, organized, and legal outcomes of the nominations period.

Media of Critical Importance in Elections Season

There is no question on the importance of the media's role in this election. As a security issue, it is the media who can either inflame dissent or support peace.

Local independent radio stations are reportedly broadcasting PPRC announcements about political tolerance, and local PPRC officials recently appeared on several radio programs in Makeni.

The increasing number of independent radio stations, including Independent Radio Network (IRN), Cotton Tree Network (CTN), and those carrying news from the BBC, contribute to flow of information. Citizens can hear UN Radio nationwide as well.