



**Key dates  
 for 2007:**

- **Feb. 26 - Mar. 18:** Voter Registration Period
- **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

**Inside  
 this issue:**

- NEW, Fellow CSOs to Monitor and Report on Elections 2
- Traditional Leaders, Paramount Chiefs, and Religious Leaders Meet in Bo Town to Discuss Democracy 2
- Political Party Agents to Monitor Election Day Activity 2
- Second NDI Pre-Election Mission Visits Sierra Leone 3
- International Delegations to Observe August Polls 3
- Candidates for August Elections 4
- Campaigning for August Elections in Full Swing 4
- In Brief: Electoral Courts Begin Operating 4

## Polling and Counting Procedures Finalized as NEC Trains Election Day Staff Nationwide

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) has recruited and trained over 30,000 polling staff who will work on election day.

The NEC has reiterated its commitment to the integrity of its polling staff, and has upheld its earlier decision to blacklist 1,500 polling officials contracted to work during the 2004 local government elections.

The conduct of the polls is governed by the 1991 Constitution, the 2002 Electoral Laws Act and its amendments, and NEC regulations and procedures. The procedures for polling and counting have been finalized, and are summarized in a training of trainers manual on polling and counting which the NEC has distributed.

The NEC is training polling staff on procedures for election day, including procedures for opening of the polls, voting, counting, and the rights and responsibilities of party agents and accredited election observers.

Voters with disabilities, the elderly, and pregnant or nursing women will be given an opportunity to go the front of the queues on election day. A voter with a disability may request the assistance of a helper of her/his own choice, such as a friend or relative, as long as that person is a registered voter and only assists one

person. Polling staff and party agents are never allowed to assist voters.

All registered Sierra Leoneans with valid Voter ID cards whose names are in the Final Voters Register (FVR) for a particular polling station are qualified to vote.

If a voter has lost their voter ID card, but their name appears on the FVR, the voter will be allowed to vote if they can produce a valid pictured Identification Card.

When a voter arrives at a polling station and his/her name is ticked on the FVR, the voter's Voter ID Card will be punched on the right hand side of the card between the coat of arms and the NEC logo. After casting his/her ballot, the voter's finger will be inked to ensure that they are not able to cast a second ballot.

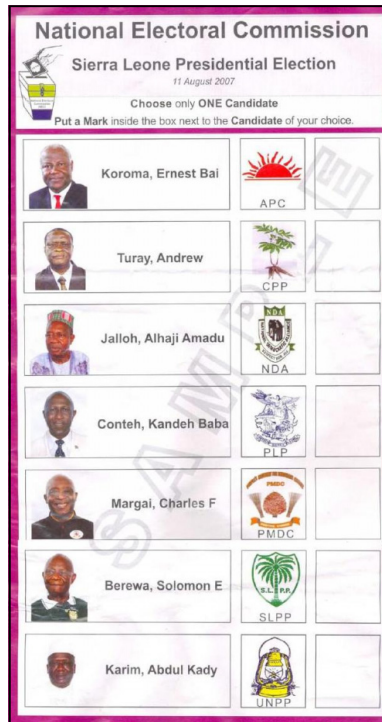
For the first time in Sierra Leone, tactile ballot guides will be provided across the nation to allow visually impaired voters to cast their ballots in secret.

On election day, the polls will open at 7am and will close at 5pm. All persons who are in the queue at 5pm will be allowed to vote.

Votes cast in each polling station will be counted following the close of the polls on August 11. All votes will then be tallied at a National Tally Center in Freetown.

On election day, no campaign materials should be within 400 yards of the polling center.

Sierra Leone Police will be present at all polling centers. Security personnel will also be outside of the polling station, unless their presence is required inside by the Presiding Officer.



A sample presidential ballot for the August 11 elections, distributed by the NEC.

## NEC, CSOs Support Women's Participation

Throughout the electoral process, the NEC and civil society organizations (CSOs) have promoted the role of women in the political process as candidates and voters. The NEC is working in conjunction with the Forum for African Women Education (FAWE) to educate women on how to vote. Taking into consideration the high level of illiteracy among women, the NEC is educating women on voting rules and procedures. About 49 percent of those registered to vote in Sierra Leone are women, as are 11 percent of the parliamentary candidates.

The United Nations Develop-

ment Fund for Women (UNIFEM) held a workshop in July called "Salone Women Peacekeepers for Elections 2007," advocating for women's full participation as voters, candidates, and political party supporters. The Forum for Women Empowerment and Development (FOWED) recently conducted a 2-day workshop on governance and leadership issues in Bo City. The Westminster Foundation also held a 3-day workshop in Freetown and other districts for women parliamentary candidates in June. The workshop focused on guiding effective campaigning, managing campaign teams, and shaping the

political message for targeted constituencies. 50/50 has been involved in similar work supporting women in the electoral process.

Recently women in Sierra Leone launched a new advocacy coalition called "Women's Election Watch Plus." In a workshop on August 1, members of the group pledged: to unite and support each other so that political parties would understand that women can use their votes as a bargaining tool; and to rally the constitutional review commission to adopt a quota system that would require 30 percent of national and local elections candidates be women.

## NEW, Fellow CSOs to Monitor and Report on Elections

The National Election Watch (NEW) is gearing up to observe the August 11 presidential and parliamentary elections.

NEW's district teams are implementing a 30-day plan developed to recruit observers for every polling station and train these observers to provide high quality reports on election day. As part of this process, NEW is also accrediting all its observers through the NEC, printing t-shirts for observers, writing and printing an observer manual and reporting tools, and training its observers on their roles and responsibilities.

Within 24 hours of the close of the polls, NEW plans to release a "rapid report" summarizing election day events. NEW's observers will send SMS text messages to a command center shortly after the elections. NDI is providing technical support to help NEW develop this messaging infrastructure. The SMS system that NEW is putting into place is the first of its kind used by a civil society group in Africa monitoring an election.

Approximately two weeks after the elections, NEW will release a second, more comprehensive report based on detailed

information from a checklist completed by observers.

NEW welcomes the assistance of CSOs and other nonpartisan organizations that can assemble additional observers, provide logistical support, or offer transportation. Please contact Vice Chair of NEW, Ken Ganna Conteh, at 076 607 503 or 033 364 161.

Other CSOs that will be observing the August 11 polls include the Independent Monitoring Group, the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone, the Coalition for Election Monitoring, and the 50/50 Group.

## Traditional Leaders, Paramount Chiefs, and Religious Leaders Meet in Bo Town to Discuss Democracy

On July 1 and 2, the Catholic Mission in Freetown, Bo Diocese, Fatima Institute, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) organized an event for traditional leaders, paramount chiefs, and religious leaders to discuss their role in democratization processes in Sierra Leone.

Forty-five out of Bo's 53 paramount chiefs attended the event, which was meant to foster dialogue on independent, responsible, and accountable leadership.

The event also engaged participants on the principles of good governance, law, and human rights legislation.

The NEC Commissioner for the Southern Region, Mr. Winston Minah, and NDI Country Director Nick Demeter spoke at the event.

In his presentation, Mr. Minah talked in detail about the history of the chiefdoms, noting that the chieftaincy is deeply embroidered in the social structure of Sierra Leone. He expressed his expectations that paramount chiefs should be above party politics and should help the NEC establish a level playing field for the upcoming elections. He called for paramount chiefs to remain a symbol of unity and maintain

impartiality and neutrality in providing free access to all political stakeholders.

In his address, Mr. Demeter emphasized the important role that paramount chiefs and religious leaders can play in promoting peaceful, fair, and transparent elections, and supporting economic development efforts after the elections. He called on paramount chiefs to work closely with the youth in preventing tension during and after the presidential and parliamentary elections.

Radio Maria and UN Radio broad-

casted the event, and local print journalists and the BBC covered it as well.



Participants in the two-day democracy seminar in Bo included traditional leaders, paramount chiefs, and religious leaders.

## Political Party Agents to Monitor Election Day Activity

Each of the seven political parties contesting these elections, as well as some independent parliamentary candidates, are in the process of recruiting and training their members to work as pollwatchers (also referred to as "party agents") on election day.

These representatives will be present at polling stations across Sierra Leone on election day to observe the voting process on behalf of their party or candidate, question any irregular activities in the polling station, and verify the results of the vote count.

Like non-partisan election observers, party agents are assigned to a single polling station and are expected to record their observations on the entire voting and counting processes.

However, since party agents represent candidates, the NEC has formalized their

role by inviting them to sign a series of forms, including the results form, which pollworkers fill in throughout election day. If party agents do not consider the information in these forms to be accurate, they have the right to demonstrate their concern by choosing not to sign the documents.

Party agents are not allowed to interfere with the polling and counting process in any way and will strive not to make false accusations. While the NEC allows each party to assign two agents to a polling station, only one from each party is allowed in the station at any time.

To assist political parties in implementing their pollwatching strategies, NDI conducted a series of training of trainers workshops with party leaders from each of the 14 districts. These workshops provided the party representatives with information, tips, and techniques that will be valuable

in recruiting, training, and deploying party agents on election day.

The workshops opened with a session that focused on reasons why party pollwatching is a valuable exercise both for the party and for the integrity of the election itself. The facilitators explained how the voting and counting procedures should take place on election day and how agents should react if they observe irregularities in these procedures.

Participants also set up the room to resemble a polling station and each played the role of a voter, pollworker, or observer to familiarize themselves with their role.

Throughout the day, the NDI facilitators highlighted strategies that participants could use to ensure that the step-down trainings they conducted with their own party members were informative and effective.

## Second NDI Pre-Election Mission Visits Sierra Leone

An international pre-election delegation organized by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) visited Sierra Leone July 9-16 to assess preparations for the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections.

The delegation was composed of seven political and civic leaders as well as election experts from Africa, Europe, and North America. The delegation met with Sierra Leonean civic leaders, electoral authorities, government officials, political parties, and representatives of the media and international community in Freetown.

On Monday, July 16, in Freetown, they released a statement detailing their findings. The statement included the following observations and recommendations, among others:

### Political Environment

Sierra Leone's August 2007 national elections take place under challenging circumstances. These elections will be the first for which the government is fully responsible since the end of the civil war – a so-called "second generation" election considered critical to the success of political, social, and economic recovery.

The emerging multi-party system in Sierra Leone offers an encouraging sign for the future of democratic governance. However, the delegation noted at least two major problems in the electoral process: conducting the election during the rainy season and financing the election. The first potential problem lies beyond the control of government; however, preparations to minimize possible effects must be a high priority. Second, financing has been challenging due to resource shortfalls, requiring a late-day infusion of funds from the UN Peace Building Commission fund for Sierra Leone.

### Political Institutions

The National Election Commission (NEC) has achieved considerable independence and made impressive progress since its reorganization began in 2005. The Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) is now monitoring political parties, including their compliance with the Code of Conduct, which all parties signed in No-



NDI's second pre-election delegation announced its findings and recommendations in Freetown on July 16.

ember 2005. The Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and other security forces are actively engaged in maintaining a peaceful environment in conjunction with the legal framework created to govern the elections.

### Legal Framework

The 2007 national elections are being conducted within a legal framework based on relevant articles from Sierra Leone's 1991 Constitution, 2002 Electoral Laws Act, and 2002 Political Parties Act. This framework will merit a full review after the August 2007 polls are complete.

The newly-established and innovative courts for electoral petitions and offences will be critical to the success of the electoral process. The success of these courts will depend on how political parties and voters view the adjudication process, the competence of judges and courts, the perception and reality of impartiality, and the attention of monitors.

### Political Tolerance

The delegation applauds Sierra Leoneans placing a high premium on political

tolerance in this election. Continuing intensive civic education, however, is necessary to ensure behavior matches aspiration. Responsibility for voter education must be shared by political parties and not just the NEC and PPRC.

Civil society must also actively engage citizens to participate in the electoral process, thus fostering political tolerance before, during, and after the elections.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In the spirit of international cooperation, the delegation respectfully offers the following recommendations:

- The Government of Sierra Leone should take steps to ensure that a level playing field is provided in order to dispel the perception of voters regarding the use of state resources.
- The NEC should ensure that political parties and citizens are informed of the mechanisms in place to resolve electoral disputes, particularly in the event of a close election.
- In order to secure peaceful elections, the SLP should continue to maintain their independence, respond promptly to complaints, and coordinate with other stakeholders.
- Political parties and candidates should continue to abide by the Political Parties Code of Conduct and the Code of Campaign Ethics and ensure their members refrain from violence and intimidation.
- Domestic observers should monitor the entire electoral process, including the post-election period and adjudication process.
- Paramount chiefs and religious leaders should encourage their subjects and followers to promote political tolerance and a nonviolent electoral environment, including freedom of movement of all political parties.
- The international community should continue to demonstrate its interest in and support for these important elections in Sierra Leone.

## International Delegations to Observe August Polls

International election observers representing several different organizations will observe the August 11 presidential and parliamentary elections.

NDI will field a team of nearly 40 observers on election day. The NDI delegation will be co-led by Ken Nnamani, Former Senate President (Nigeria); Nora Owen, Former Minister for Justice (Ireland); Audrey McLaughlin, Former Member of Parliament and Former Leader of the New Democratic Party (Canada); Carol Lancaster, Former Deputy Administrator of the US Agency for International Development and Director of the Mortara Center, Georgetown University (United States); and Chris Fomunyoh, NDI Senior Associate for Africa (Cameroon).

The NDI delegation is composed of civic leaders, elections experts, and regional

specialists from 16 different countries, and is tasked with providing an accurate and impartial assessment of the electoral process.

In addition to observing the conduct of the polls on election day and the counting of votes, the delegation will assess the legal framework for the elections, the role of political parties, the role of the media and public discourse pertaining to the election, preparations by the NEC, and the overall security environment.

Other international delegations are also observing the electoral process. The European Union will deploy a team of 80 international observers across the country, and the Commonwealth and African Union will each deploy teams of 17 members. ECOWAS will also deploy international election observers.

# Candidates for the August Elections

Candidates from seven political parties in Sierra Leone are contesting the presidential election, while 566 candidates are contesting the parliamentary election.

To date, only one parliamentary candidate, a representative from the National Democratic Alliance in Kenema, has withdrawn his candidacy.

Of the 566 parliamentary candidates, 64, or 11 percent, are women. The SLPP has 17 women candidates, the PMDC 12, and the APC 11. Of the 12 independent candidates, three are women.

For the first time in Sierra Leone's history, a number of candidates are persons with disabilities.

## Parliamentary Candidates

POLITICAL PARTY	Total # of candidates	# of female candidates
All Peoples Congress (APC)	112	11
Convention People's Party (CPP)	62	6
National Democratic Alliance (NDA)	88	7
Peace and Liberation Party (PLP)	20	2
People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC)	111	12
Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP)	112	17
United National Peoples Party (UNPP)	49	6
Independents	12	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>566</b>	<b>64</b>

## Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates

### All Peoples Congress (APC)

Hon. Ernest Bai Koroma,  
*presidential candidate*  
Samuel Sam-Sumana,  
*vice presidential candidate*

### Convention People's Party (CPP)

Andrew Turay,  
*presidential candidate*  
Lansana K. Conteh,  
*vice presidential candidate*

### National Democratic Alliance (NDA)

Alhaji Amadu Jalloh,  
*presidential candidate*  
Margaret B. Sidikie,  
*vice presidential candidate*

### Peace and Liberation Party (PLP)

Kandeh B. Conteh,  
*presidential candidate*

Sheik Bakarr Sulaiman Tarawullia,  
*vice presidential candidate*

### People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC)

Charles F. Margai,  
*presidential candidate*  
Dr. Ibrahim Tejan Jalloh,  
*vice presidential candidate*

### Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP)

Solomon E. Berewa,  
*presidential candidate*  
Foreign Minister Momodu Koroma,  
*vice presidential candidate*

### United National Peoples Party (UNPP)

Abdul K. Karim,  
*presidential candidate*  
Mohamed Sei,  
*vice presidential candidate*

## NDI in Sierra Leone

As the August 2007 elections approach, NDI is working with civil society and political parties to enhance prospects for a transparent, peaceful, and free electoral process.

Through its programs, NDI works to ensure that women, youth, and disabled persons are included in all aspects of the elections process.

NDI is partnering with Sierra Leonean organizations to conduct voter education campaigns and with political

parties on pollwatching and candidate debates.

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 support to domestic observer organizations.

Additional information on NDI's programming in Sierra Leone can be found at [www.ndi.org](http://www.ndi.org).



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# Campaigning for August Elections in Full Swing

Since the launch of the official campaign period in July, parties and candidates have switched from "sensitizing" the public to campaigning for the elections. Many parties have distributed banners, posters, t-shirts, and hats, and some use vehicles with signage and loudspeakers for campaigning.

Reports indicate that parties are adhering to the Campaign Code of Conduct. Rallies have largely been peaceful.

However, some campaigns have reported that opposing parties have torn down literature, banners, and posters. In other cases instances of violence have been reported.

All three of Sierra Leone's major political parties – the APC, PMDC, and SLPP – have released their party manifestos. The manifestos focus on a number of key areas: gender issues, children, youth, corruption, judicial reform, freedom of information, the criminal libel law, and Sierra Leone's international human rights commitments.

The vice presidential debate will occur on August 5 and the presidential debate on August 7.

Parliamentary debates and candidate forums have been held in some districts, giving citizens an opportunity to hear from their parliamentary candidates on issues of importance to their communities.

August 9 will be the final day of campaigning, and August 10 will be a rest day before the elections.

## In Brief:

# Electoral Courts Begin Operating

Six electoral courts began operating in Sierra Leone on July 16. Three are located in Freetown and one each in the regional centers of Bo, Kenema, and Makeni.

The same judge will preside over two types of electoral courts – the electoral offences courts and the election petition courts. Both courts will sit for a period of six months, and will follow the High Court Rules of Procedure.

The electoral offences courts will hear criminal matters with reference to the offences listed in the Electoral Laws Act (Sections 93 through 111). These offences will include those committed in connection with parliamentary elections, from registration through the final announcements of results.

The election petition courts will handle civil matters specifically linked to the results of the elections, which must be announced no later than two weeks after the polls. Petitions will be submitted within 7 days of announcement of results and adjudicated within 4 months.