



NATIONAL ELECTION WATCH (NEW)

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Press Statement for Immediate Release

Freetown Wednesday 11th November 2020: NEW Incident Reporting Ahead of Re-run Elections

Politicians Scramble over Completion of Goderich Community Centre

Ahead of Constituency 110 Re-run Election, Political Party stalwarts from the All People's Congress (APC) and Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) are scrambling over who should complete the construction of the Goderich Community Centre and this has resulted in community tension and unrest with the police intervening to quell the situation and arrests made. The incident took place at about 12:30 pm on Wednesday, 11th November 2020.

NEW's pre-election assessment team for the December 12th Re-run election observed a growing community tension and unrest in constituency 110 specifically at Goderich Village where political party functionaries had a standoff on who should take the lead to complete the village community centre. Residents in the community stated that the former Member of Parliament, had been rehabilitating this community centre but work had stalled after the 2018 elections. In the run up to this re-run election, the former Member of Parliament recommenced work at the community centre by fixing metal doors. The community people alleged that officials from NACSA came to the structure under rehabilitation stating that they received a request from the community people to complete the community centre and they were about to proceed with this. Political Party functionaries from both sides were desperate to be the one leading the rehabilitation process. This situation, however, resulted in a standoff between supporters of the APC and SLPP with community people as onlookers. The police from the Adonkia and Lumley police division went to the scene and all political party stakeholders present were escorted by the police for further questioning at the Lumley police station.

Residents are worried about the continuous importation of violence in their community in the name of elections. They further lamented on the fact that despite their ballots were destroyed and elections cancelled, no one was held accountable. They are therefore calling on the police to provide information on the current state of the investigations on the cancelled re-run election and how they plan to police the December 12 re-run election. This is because the large number of police presence in the area did not deter the degree of violence during the August 24th re-run election last time.

NEW further recommends that as a strategy to ensure calm in the constituency all stakeholders including the NEC, PPRC, SLP, ONS, NCD, HRSL, community leaders and the candidates should have a joint engagement in strategic communities especially hot spots areas in the constituency".

NEW calls on the ONS and SLP to devise a clear strategy to maintain the peace in constituency 110 re-run election, before, during and after the polls.

National Election Watch (NEW) is a coalition of local and international organizations in Sierra Leone with a common objective of supporting free, fair and peaceful elections. NEW will continue to observe all elections related activities and will report its findings accordingly.

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Banker: Sierra Leone Commercial Bank (SLCB)