



NATIONAL ELECTION WATCH (NEW)

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Press Statement for Immediate Release

Freetown, 6th May 2021: First Day of NCRA Confirmation and Registration Exercise in the Western Region Shows Inadequate Planning and Lack of Public Awareness

NCRA according to schedule started off the Confirmation and Registration exercise in the Western Region today, 6th of May 2021 but failed to meet most of the standard procedures of the process. 100% of the 108 centres where stationed observers are deployed, in addition to centres visited by roving observers, did not open on time. At 7:00am according to the NCRA manual, when the centres were to be opened, there were no materials, equipment and key staff for the process to start. All centres visited had no identification signs to indicate the location of the confirmation and registration centres to assist applicants/registrants to know where the centres are located.

NEW recruited, trained and deployed 108 stationed observers, which is 50% of the NCRA established confirmation and registration centres. In addition to the stationed observers NEW also deployed supervisors 1 to every 10 observers and 6 roving teams of 3 each to have a fair coverage of the entire process.

Findings

- All centres observed did not open on time at 7:00am according to the NCRA manual
- There is inconsistency in information on the time of opening. Whilst the manual and some other publications indicate 7:00am as time of opening, the IEC materials pasted at the centres indicate 8:00am.
- At the expected time of opening of the centres (7:00am) there were no materials and equipment in all centres observed.
- Deployment of equipment and materials to all centres observed was delayed beyond 10:00am
- No centre of the centres observed opened before 1:00pm
- Authorities/owners of some centres were not aware of their premises being identified as established centres. Some of the school authorities denied NCRA staff access to their premises.

- Some of the centres observed did not have the required number of NCRA personnel including centre supervisors, Queue controllers and Journal Entry Officer.
- In all centres observed, security presence was absent.
- In all the centres visited there were no queue of applicants/registrants indicating weak sensitization and awareness raising on the process.

The events of day 1 of the confirmation and registration exercise do not reflect an organized process and failure to correct the current anomalies will deter NCRA from reaching the desired goals and expectations which will result in waste of time and public resources.

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.

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