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Sierra Leone
Association of
Non-
Governmental
Organization
(SLANGO)

25th October, 2021

The Chief Electoral Commissioner
National Electoral Commission
Tower Hill, Freetown

Dear Sir,

**THE CONDUCT OF THE KOINADUGU DISTRICT COUNCIL BYE-ELECTIONS AND
THE SAMA BENDUGU VACANT SEAT A CALL FOR CONCERN**

As stakeholders of the National Electoral Commission way back in 2007 after support was accorded to us by the British High Commission to popularize Voter Education and registration of First Time Voters in 22 senior secondary schools in Freetown and Waterloo.

Since 2007, the National Electoral Commission is one of our core partners in development especially on electoral governance. Fortunately we were part of the November 7th 2020 development of the 2020-2024 NEC Strategic Plan held at Brook fields Hotel in Freetown.

Sir, we agreed on so many issues ranging from NEC permanent staff and their ad-hoc staff employed during elections especially those who misbehaved during the Tonkoh Limba bye-election that led to death of 14 years old boy and by extension electoral fraud.

Unfortunately, NEC had the tenacity to cancel bye-elections twice in Tonkoh and Constituency 110 without pointing out any extant of the law, fingers were pointing at NEC of being a non-credible institution to conduct any public elections and referenda. NEC has been on the spotlight for the wrong reasons and hence needed a new leadership to clean it up and change the way they used to do business.

Unfortunately sir, this esteemed institution (i.e. NEC) is again on the spotlight for the Koinadugu local council bye-elections, the same old problem. Your staff is allegedly again on the spot lights and these issues were identified as a very serious challenge which you should handle moving forward after the vetting of the Strategic Plan at Brook fields Hotel on the 7th November 2020.

Sir, you will recall that more than 6 months ago, a sitting Member of Parliament from Constituency 057, Sambaia Bendugu, Tonkolili District, Northern Province opted to become Paramount Chief; he was successful in his bid, that Parliamentary seat is still vacant. Because of constitutional provision mentioned below, we call on you without delays to come up with a date for that said bye-election.

As it is stated in sec 39. (1) ***When the seat of any Member of Parliament becomes***

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vacant, the vacancy shall be filled by election, not later than six months after the vacancy occurs, in accordance with the provisions of law relating to such election; Provided that if Parliament is dissolved before such election is due to be held, the vacancy shall be filled at the general election.

(2) The Proclamation

appointing a date for the holding of an election to fill a vacancy shall be published in the Gazette not less than twenty-one days before the date appointed for holding the election.

Sir, it is also stipulated in Sec 77 (f), A Member of Parliament shall vacate his seat in Parliament, if in the case of such a Member as is referred to in paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 74, he becomes a Paramount Chief under any law; or

Mr. Chief Electoral Commissioner, you will agree with me that the actions of your staff have attendant consequences on your hard worn reputation and the National Electoral Commission (NEC)), FoSLYN advises that you do the following to clean and maintain your reputation by doing the following:

1. To avoid future occurrences in subsequent elections we suggest that you don't allow high profile politicians who have the penchant to steer insecurity in polling stations.
2. Ensure that all staff (both core and support staff) attached to NEC remain independent and impartial and maintain high standards of professionalism in their conduct towards the electoral process of the country.
3. Election result(s) that are validated by all parties involved in observing and monitoring elections are protected and kept under safe custody
4. Prevent electoral malpractices that will question the credibility of NEC and the entire electoral management system in the country.
5. We call on the Sierra Leone Police to without delays charge to Court the NEC staff caught on the height as we are prepared to monitor the proceedings at the High Court and give updates to the public.
6. Without delays give us/the public a date for the Constituency 057, Sambaia Bendugu, Tonkolili Bye-Election.

Yours in Development.

Thomas Pa Alie Babadie

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Executive Director

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Forum of Sierra Leonean Youth Network (FoSLYN)

Address: Second Floor, 74 Pademba Road, Freetown

Tel: +232-77-595421

Email: foslynsalonepupils@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.foslynsalone.org> (under construction)

Cc: The Speaker of Parliament

The Honorable Clerk of Sierra Leone Parliament

Administrative Secretary (NEC)