



NATIONAL ELECTION WATCH (NEW)

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Press Statement for Immediate Release

Freetown Wednesday 17th November 2021: NEW calls on the National Electoral Commission Sierra Leone (NEC-SL) to stand by its earlier decision to countermand the results of Ward 091 Kono District and further recommends that a re-run of the bye election be done for the affected center.

National Election Watch (NEW) agrees with the earlier decision of the National Electoral Commission Sierra Leone (NEC-SL) to countermand the result of the bye election of Ward 091 Kono District 'until proper enquires are made on the issues raised'. NEW has however observed with disappointment that the NEC-SL has changed this decision and counted the tampered ballots though all the tampered ballots were not retrieved. This action goes against the rule of polling and counting taking place at the polling station, an action that enhances public confidence and trust in the electoral process.

NEW draws the attention of the public to the fact that the NEC-SL conducted a bye election in Ward 091 in Kono District on Saturday, 13th November 2021. Whilst the voting process generally ended peacefully, violence erupted during counting at Centre Code 3131, UMC Primary School/Court Barray, Yayah. The SLPP party agent for Polling Station 1 snatched the ballot papers and he was immediately joined by a group of other militant youth who jumped into the Polling Centre and carted away the ballots. This resulted in the police firing teargas canisters to disperse the crowd.

NEW strongly recommends that a re-run of the bye election be conducted in the affected center. Counting the tampered retrieved ballots undermines a credible, fair, accountable and transparent process, one that the electorate will find difficult to accept the outcome.

NEW will continue to follow-up on this process and report to the public accordingly.

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)