



NATIONAL ELECTION WATCH (NEW)

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Press Statement for Immediate Release

Freetown, 14th March 2022: NEW Notes the Timely Proclamation of Presidential and Parliamentary Elections Dates

National Election Watch (NEW), today witnessed the proclamation of the dates for the Presidential Election scheduled for 24th June 2023 by the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL) and notes the Public Notice from the Office of the President, State House Freetown, of 11th March 2022, indicating the dates for Paramount Chief Member of Parliament (PCMP), Ordinary Member of Parliament and Local Council elections scheduled for 20th May 2023 and 24th June 2023 respectively. NEW draws attention to the fact that the Local Council election was to have been held in 2022 but by amendment of the Local Government Act, the tenure of councils was extended to merge with the Presidential and Parliamentary elections. NEW notes the schedule for Voter Registration on the 3rd September to 4th October 2022 for the 2023 general elections.

NEW further notes the schedule for the process of the Village Head Elections which started today, Monday 14th March 2022 with Pre-assessment and ground trotting process to contribute to the identification of NEW villages and GIS mapping of Village Head electoral boundaries for elections to take place on 11th February 2023.

NEW recognizes the timely proclamations of the Presidential and Parliamentary election dates as best practice to inform the citizens and as a first step towards ensuring credible, transparent and accountable electoral process.

Voter Registration is an integral part of the electoral process and therefore requires special attention. The public should thus be educated on the process clearly explaining the role of the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) with regards the data that the ECSL will extract to develop the Voters Register and the steps that are involved and scenarios expected at the Registration centres.

NEW acknowledges that the conduct of the Village Head Election is managed by both the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) and the ECSL and therefore calls for a clear definition of roles and responsibilities to ensure a smooth process that will guarantee an outcome with integrity and acceptable.

NEW acknowledges the ongoing Electoral Legal Reforms by the various Election Management Bodies (EMBs), but is concerned about the timely conclusion of the processes to be effected for this electoral cycle. NEW therefore urges the ECSL, the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC), the Government of Sierra Leone, Parliament and other election stakeholders to conclude all processes six months to the dates of the elections in compliance with the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

Consequent to the proclamation of the election dates, NEW encourages all players to engage with the electoral process by respecting the legal framework and also exhibiting political tolerance for a true display of democratic tenets.

NEW will continue to follow-up on all electoral cycle activities and will report its findings accordingly.

National Election Watch (NEW) is a coalition of 400 Local and International Organizations in Sierra Leone with a common objective of supporting free, fair and peaceful elections.