

FIRST WEEKLY PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE MONITORING OF THE VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS IN SIERRA LEONE



RESEARCHED AND COMPILED BY THE ELECTION MONITORS OF LEGAL LINK



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Introduction

In Sierra Leone, the registration of voters and the conduct of public elections and referenda remains the exclusive responsibility of the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone (ECSL). Such could be seen under section 31, 32 & 33 of the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone. In line with this Constitutional mandate, NEC now ECSL has proceeded to conduct several public elections in Sierra Leone namely the 1996, 2002, 2007, 2012 and the 2018 general elections.

In all of these elections, ECSL has fairly maintained a high sense of independence in terms of the conduct of voter registration as well as the general elections in the country. However, ahead of the 2023 general elections, ECSL has introduced new measures beginning with the voter registration process. The roll out of some of these measures has sparked hues and cries in some parts of the country.

To ascertain the veracity of some of these claims or the lack thereof coupled with its mandate to defend the rights of vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone and to further advocate for democratic good governance, respect for human rights, rule of law and accountability within public institutions, **Christian Lawyers Centre** hereinafter referred to as **LEGAL LINK** has on **Saturday 3rd September, 2022** embarked on a rigorous monitoring exercise of ECSL's voter Registration exercise across the country.

After one week (7 days) of its Monitoring exercise, LEGAL LINK has decided to release its first weekly preliminary report in a bid to showcase best practices and further expose gaps, weaknesses and loopholes in the voter registration process for urgent action and redress by ECSL, Election Management Bodies and the government of Sierra Leone.

While LEGAL LINK commends ECSL over its recent Status Update and press conference regarding the voter registration process, it is important to however emphasize that such update only gives an insider perspective of the voter registration process. Unlike ECSL's Status Update, this first weekly preliminary report will showcase the successes and challenges in the voter registration process from an outsider's perspective.

Aims and objectives of the report

The main aim of undertaking this monitoring exercise is to ascertain best practices as well as unearth the challenges facing the voter registration process and to proffer timely and plausible recommendations to ECSL and the government of Sierra Leone for timely reforms and intervention.

Other objectives include:

to assess the level of turnout, the timely and professional delivery of services by ECSL, the securitization of the process and the treatment accorded to persons with special needs as they took part in the voting registration process amongst others.

Justification of the monitoring exercise

This Monitoring exercise is important because of the under-mentioned reasons:-

It provides an independent assessment of the voter registration process- identifies best practices as well as weaknesses and challenges in the voter registration process;

It brings to the limelight the practical problems encountered in the field by registrants;

Through the recommendations proffered, ECSL and the government of Sierra Leone are helped in a positive way to realizing these challenges and addressing them in a timely manner;

It further makes for an improved, all inclusive, transparent and acceptable voter registration process.

Methodology of the Report

The report adopts a mixed methodology; qualitative as well as quantitative methodology.

In relation to the qualitative methodology, desktop research and other reports was relied on especially in assessing the legal frameworks governing the conduct of public elections in Sierra Leone. In terms of quantitative, the report adopted various tools like interviews, observations, focus group discussions and data survey analysis.

Participants Targeted

The participants targeted in the voter registration Monitoring exercise are as follows: ECSL coordinators and staff, Registrants, Party Agents, Independent observers, Security personnel and vulnerable groups.

The scope of the report

The scope of this report covers LEGAL LINK's monitoring of the voter registration process since **Saturday 3rd September to Friday 9th September 2022**. The report gives a critical analysis of the first one week of the voter registration exercise throughout the country. Even though references are made to specific centers in some of the districts, the report however covers Monitoring exercise that was done in some of the voter registration centers scattered across the 16 districts of Sierra Leone, particularly in the headquarter towns.

Limitations of the report

Though the report covered every district in Sierra Leone, not all of the 1,815 registration centres was however personally monitored. Financial constraints prevented the Monitoring team from observing the voter registration centres across the country.

In places where LEGAL LINK monitors were unable to go however, the team depended on reports from district coordinators, human rights defenders, councilors, parliamentarians and other stakeholders in the district regarding the voter registration exercise.

Monitoring and Research team

LEGAL LINK Election Monitors and research officers that took part in the monitoring exercise were made up of the following category of persons: Interns, students, legal volunteers, district coordinators, human rights defenders and civil society activists.

UNDERSTANDING THE KEY GOVERNING LAWS AND FRAMEWORKS ON THE VOTER REGISTRATION EXERCISE

Below are some of the relevant laws and frameworks in Sierra Leone that deals with voter registration for the purposes of public elections and referenda.

The 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone

Under section 31 of the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone, a constitutional obligation is placed on ECSL to register eligible citizens of Sierra Leone that are of sound mind and are 18 years of age to take part in public elections or referenda. It is therefore incumbent on ECSL and the government of Sierra Leone to ensure that every eligible Citizen in the country is guaranteed his or her democratic right to participate in the electioneering process.

The Public Elections Act of 2012

The Public Elections Act of 2012 is still the extant law governing the conduct of public elections in Sierra Leone. The law puts the responsibility to register voters for public elections exclusively on ECSL. While a new law had been enacted in 2022, such has however not been assented to by the President. Hence the 2012 framework still remains in force as the substantive law regarding the conduct of public elections in Sierra Leone.

The National Civil Registration Act 2016

According to section 25 (b) of the National Civil Registration Act 2016, the Director General can provide information in relation to births, adoptions, deaths, marriages, divorces or nullities to ECSL for the purposes of getting an updated register of voters for the conduct of public elections and referenda.

For purposes of clarity, section 25 is stated verbatim:

" Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law relating to data protection, the Director-General shall provide information in relation to births, adoptions, deaths, marriages, divorces or nullities registered under this Act to

(b) the National Electoral Commission for the purpose of getting an updated register of voters for the conduct of public elections and referenda; "

The Public Elections Act 2022

This is the new law proposed in 2022 to govern the conduct of public elections in Sierra Leone. While it had been enacted by Parliament, the law is yet to be assented to by the President. When this is done, this Act will now repeal and replace the Public Elections Act of 2012.

KEY FEATURES OF THE 2022 VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS AS DESIGNED BY ECSL.

According to the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone (ECSL), the key features of the 2022 voter registration process are as follows:

1. Voter Registration Centres will open for 15 days each in two (2) phases. For phase 1 from 3rd - 17th September 2022 and for phase 2 from 20th September - 4th October 2022.
2. Registration centres will open from 7:00am - 5:00pm daily .
3. There will be an NCRA desk in the Voter Registration centres to capture persons who did not register with NCRA during the Civil Registration process.
4. (a) Persons whose details are in the civil register database will be processed through the Voter Verification Kits (VVK).

b. Persons whose details are not captured in the civil register database (new registrants) will be first captured through the VIU Kits, after which they will then proceed to be captured as voters through the VVK.
5. Registrants are encouraged to register at the nearest centre where you reside (near your home). In 2023, you will be voting where you registered.
6. (a). Documentary proof of Identity: National ID card, passport, birth certificate, certificate of naturalization, Local tax receipt.

(b). Where a Registrant do not have any of these documents to show, the ECSL staff will issue out a witness form that either of the following people will fill and vouch on the Registrant's behalf: Paramount Chief, Tribal Head, Town Chief, Section Chief, Village Head, Religious Leader, Head of Educational Institution, Councilor.
- 7) Citizens whose age will turn 18 years on or before the 23rd day of June 2023 are also encourage to register during this voter registration process.

THEMATIC FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

During the first week of voter registration, the monitoring team and district coordinators observed various issues that were positive and negative. But for purposes of clarity, the general observations have been categorized under various thematic heads.

1) Level of population turnout for the registration process

Despite the huge bottlenecks that eclipsed the voter registration process, the population turnout is positively appreciating on a daily basis. The determination and resolve of registrants is mind blowing. In some of the centres visited particularly in the Western Area of Freetown, Registrants pay youths to queue up and fill queue slips for them as early as 2am in the morning to be able to register in that centre for that day.

Some stay in the queue for over 4 hours while some even show up at the voter registration centres as early as 5 am to register. The voter turnout as of the last update given by ECSL is approaching close to 500,000 nation - wide. While ECSL claimed this figure as encouraging, some registrants are however of the opinion that this number is quite low due to the incessant delays characteristic of the voter registration process.

2) Opening up and closing of voter registration centers within the agree time stated by ECSL

With regards the above, the Monitoring team observed some delays in the opening of centres particularly during the First two days of the exercise but as time progresses and ECSL staff becoming conversant with the process, many centers opened on time (7am) and some even closed by 7pm. Testimonies from registrants revealed that some had reached the centres as early as 3am in the morning queuing up to be registered.

3) Availability of ECSL's registration materials, gadgets and rechargeable batteries for computers

The Monitoring team noted in many of the centres visited that there were available materials and gadgets provided by ECSL towards the registration exercise. Computers and rechargeable batteries were also seen in many of the centres visited. However, in few centres in the Northern provinces as well as Western Area, there were Complaints of computers as well as rechargeable batteries dying out leading to delays and/ or early closure of the registration exercise. In a particular constituency in the north, there were reports of the non -availability of receipt slips leading to the early closure of the voter registration exercise.

4) Professional handling of the registration process by ECSL Registration staff

Testimonies from a good number of Registrants interviewed reveal that apart from the Centre Coordinators and a few staff, majority of the ECSL staff checking on their records and those doing the NCRA registration and or verification were being rude, impatient and disrespect in the

execution of their duties. In some stations visited in the Western Area, there were serious tensions between registrants and ECSL staff doing the verification to the extent that the Centre Coordinator was forced to come in and have the process halted for some minutes. Many of those who suffered such treatment were largely first time voters or persons whose records were incomplete in the NCRA database.

5) Record keeping and tally system provided by ECSL to ascertain actual number of Registrants

In all the centres visited, the Monitoring team noted that ECSL maintained a special journal/ record book in which all registrants that have successfully registered are recorded. There's also a receipt slip given to all registrants that have gone through the voter registration process successfully. These two recording system helps to provide back up and further give accurate data/ statistics about number of registrants successfully registered during the voter registration process in such centre.

6) Reliance of the NCRA data as a primary source of information used by ECSL staff in the voter registration process

The Monitoring team further observed that, instead of generating an independent voter register, ESCL adopted and relied on the NCRA data in the voter registration exercise. All what registrants are now required to do is to verify their information as captured in the NCRA database. The challenge however comes to the fore in dealing with persons who have not registered with NCRA before or first time voters or those persons turning 18 years old on or before the 23rd day of June 2023.

In addressing these peculiar situations, the Monitoring team noted that ECSL transformed itself into an NCRA registration center, providing staff to do the work of NCRA. The situation becomes even more problematic when it was realized that some ECSL staff had little knowledge about the gadgets and complexities of the NCRA registration process leading them to make rash decisions or referrals of Registrants to the NCRA office.

7) Intra- party tolerance amongst supporters and/or registrants

In many of the centers visited particularly in the North, South and Western Area, there were evidence of serious Intra- party rhetorics and intolerance particularly between registrants of APC and SLPP. There are even video recordings of both party supporters fanning rhetorics of political intolerance and hate speech against each other during the registration period under review. The Monitoring team observed that tensions and suspicions between supporters of the two main political parties remain high throughout the first week of the registration process.

8) ECSL's Registration of First time voters especially those turning 18 years on or before June 23rd 2023

The Monitoring team noted serious challenges around the registration of this category of persons. Several Complaints from almost all parts of the country were report to the team regarding the non-Registration of these category of persons in the NCRA registration portal.

It is vital to emphasize that the only 3 information that can be changed in the NCRA portal are: the address, the telephone number and Disability status of the Registrant. Because these categories of persons require a change of age, it was therefore impossible for them to be registered as the NCRA system keeps rejecting them. Almost all of this category of persons were either turned down or told to come back some other day or go to the NCRA office for verification.

In some of the centres visited, ECSL Centre Coordinators show the Monitoring team a book where their names and numbers are being written down so as to get back to them should ESCL address the situation. This situation did pose a serious challenge to the voter registration process and further raised a lot of criticisms and bashing against ECSL for its mixing up of the voter registration process with that of NCRA's registration process.

9) The presence of accredited political Party Agents within the registration centers

The Monitoring team notes the presence of only two political party Agents within the centers observing the process. These political parties are the All Peoples Congress (APC) and the Sierra Leone People Party (SLPP). Record slips were seen in their hands and their vigilance in monitoring the voter registration process cannot be over-emphasized. The team also saw a few observers from the National Grand Coalition Party (NGC) who were roaming but not stationed at the centers visited.

10) Registration of Citizens not captured in the NCRA's database or whose information is missing in the NCRA database

The Monitoring team noted grave challenges when it comes to the registration of persons not captured earlier by NCRA or those having problems with their information in NCRA database. Such registrants have to go through an NCRA registration process before joining the queue for the voter registration exercise. This ultimately created incessant delays in the registration process.

For those with incorrect information that cannot be changed, referrals were made to the NCRA's head office. The situation becomes even more problematic due to the fact that it was ECSL staff and not NCRA staff that were manning the NCRA registration exercise. Some of NEC staff had little knowledge of the complexities of the NCRA registration leading them to make rash decisions or referrals of Registrants to the NCRA office. This often led to chaos and harsh reactions by Registrants in the centres especially those that had spent so much time in the queue waiting for their turn.

11) The turn-around time a Registrant takes to complete the registration process

In many of the centers visited, registrants confessed that the process is fast for persons who have done their registration with NCRA and have with them their supporting documents. Such people usually take about **10 minutes** to complete the process. However incessant delays were evident in the registration of persons that have not registered with NCRA before, or first time voters, or those turning 18 years on or before 23rd June 2023 and those persons with missing or unclear information in the NCRA's database. In some instances, this category of persons spent between **20 and 35 minutes** in trying to resolve the issues and or going through the registration process successfully.

12) The average number of people registered per day at ECSL Registration centres

From the testimonies of the Centre Coordinators, Political party Agents and ECSL record book, the average number of people successfully registered per day ranges between **80 to 130 registrants**. There were however some few centres where the number went up for some days to about 150 as a result of the familiarity of the process. Some stations in the North and North West even recorded as low as 60 people during the first two days of the voter registration exercise.

13) Special treatment accorded to vulnerable groups

The treatment accorded vulnerable groups such as (PWDs, the aged, pregnant women, suckling mothers, the sickly) during the registration process was mixed. In some centers, through the help of the police, some efforts were made to show them reasonable accommodation by giving them preference in the voter registration queues. However, in other centers especially during the early morning hours and the late afternoon, there was total disregard for consideration of their special needs due to the mad rush by Registrants to meet with the strict deadline for close of daily registration. The Monitoring team found no assigned ECSL staff to address the concerns of people with special needs so that reasonable accommodation will be shown to them in the registration process.

14) Presence of independent civil society organizations in the monitoring of the registration exercise

Not much could be accounted for in relation to the presence of independent civil society organizations monitoring of the registration process. While a few civil society organizations were seen in some stations, it is vital to emphasize that in all the centers visited, there was the acute absence of National Election Watch (NEW) observers. This certainly raises some concerns as to whether such exercise was not considered important to be effectively monitored by NEW, the leading civil society watchdog on elections in Sierra Leone. Notably however, was the presence of the EU, DFID and other international observers in some centers visited in Freetown.

15) Securitization of the registration process by the SLP

In relation to the securitization of the voter registration process, the Monitoring team observed the presence of police officers in about 98% of the centers visited. The police officers were very professional in the carrying out of their mandate and maintaining orderliness and decency of the registration process. In many instances, they helped in ensuring that queues are formed and vulnerable persons such as disables, pregnant women, suckling mothers and the aged are given priority in the registration process.

16) Interim measures put in place by ECSL to addressing challenges in real time.

By way if interim measures, the monitoring team note the following steps taken by ECSL:

There's an active Toll free line (838) created by ECSL for the public to call and make complaints regarding the voter registration process.

The Monitoring team also notes ECSL holding of a press conference early this week and its issuance of a status update report on actions taken by ECSL to address challenges.

However, not much was heard or seen by the Monitoring team regarding ECSL's updates on TV and radios as well as phone in discussions programs on the ongoing voter registration process.

STRENGTHS AND SUCCESSES IN THE VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS

Below are the best practices and successes observed during the monitoring exercise.

- ❖ Even though there were a few hiccups on the first and second day all the 1,815 registration centres remained open as of date of reporting.
- ❖ ECSL maintained a receipt slip and record book system to record all those that have successfully gone through the registration exercise. Such record is important for verification or facts and figures regarding number of registrants in case of discrepancies.
- ❖ There was evidence of professional securitization of the voter registration process by the SLP.
- ❖ At the end of each day, there were accounts and testimonies that full disclosure of the number of Registrants per day was made to party Agents and even observers.
- ❖ Effort was also seen by ECSL to give regular updates on the status of the voter registration process to the nation.
- ❖ There were also admissions made openly by ECSL regarding challenges characteristic of the voter registration process as well as steps taken to addressing same. Such honest approach is commendable.

- ❖ The move to open up a situation room with a free toll line to receive complaints and address them in real time also showcase best practice and proactive move by ECSL.
- ❖ Some efforts were also made by ECSL in the provision of rechargeable batteries to help in keeping the computers alive for a longer period.

WEAKNESSES, CHALLENGES AND LOOPHOLES IN THE VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS

Stated below are the challenges and weaknesses observed during the monitoring exercise.

- The disenfranchisement and exclusion of persons turning 18 on or before June 23rd 2023 from taking part in the voter registration exercise particularly in the first three days of the registration process reveal in fundamental terms the vulnerabilities in marriage of convenience between ECSL and NCRA. This was infact the biggest problem witnessed in the entire observation exercise as many youths complained of their turning down from the registration process by ECSL. Such was the case in almost every district in Sierra Leone.
- The 'one centre one computer policy' floated by ECSL created unnecessary delays and inconveniences to the voter registration process.
- Many polling centres with large numbers of stations were not opened by ECSL during this first phase. This gravely affected a good number of people from the registration process forcing them to wait for the second phase which might be eclipsed with a great deal of inconveniences.
- Segmenting the voter registration exercise into phases creates confusion, opens room for double Registration and corruption in the registration process.
- The Reliance and use of NCRA data that is incomplete and characterized with some mistakes as primary source of information in the voter registration process makes for problem in the registration exercise more cumbersome.
- The notable absence of National Elections Watch (NEW) observers in many centres visited to monitor the voter registration exercise is a cause for concern. Such a situation deprives the public from a civil society's perspective of the process.
- Allowing for those not registered with NCRA to now be registered by ECSL staff at the voter registration centres before completing the registration exercise makes room for confusion, unnecessary delay and reduces ECSL into an NCRA institution.
- Registration Centres selected in the first phase were far between making room for inconvenience for a good number of Registrants particularly the sick, aged, suckling mothers, PWDs etc.

- The non-availability of ECSL staff in most centres to assist vulnerable groups created inconveniences for many that came to be registered. It should be noted that the obligation is on ECSL and not the Sierra Leone Police to provide assistance to vulnerable groups as per ECSL disability policy.
- The argument of lack of resources by ECSL regarding the purchase of the required computers needed to carry out the registration process revealed the extent of unpreparedness of the institution to carry out an effective and efficient voter registration exercise.
- The delays in the registration process affected livelihoods and even caused employment queries for some people that left their offices to embark on the registration process. The psychological stress and physical exhaustion that were witnessed by many registrants cannot be over-emphasized.
- Bribery and corruption looms large in the voter registration process particularly in securing of spaces in the queues organized for the voter registration exercise in many centres. This practice was more akin to centres in the Western Urban areas. Such exploitation of Registrants may not have occurred had ECSL opened up more Registration centres.
- The refusal of ECSL to open up all the centres at the same time leads to people registering outside their areas and constituencies which might ultimately affect concentrated poll of votes during the general elections.
- The failure of ECSL to conduct a pre-test or pilot survey before relying and /or making use of NCRA's data was problematic to the process and indicates a clear show of hindsight on the part of ECSL. Many of the challenges encountered would have been discovered had there been a pre-test or pilot survey done before the roll out of the voter registration process by ECSL.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the Monitoring team above particularly regarding the challenges eclipsing the voter registration process, we hereby make the following recommendations for the urgent attention of the government, ECSL, Election Management Bodies, political parties, Civil Society Organizations, the international partners and other stakeholders in the electioneering process

- ✓ ECSL should sever the voter registration exercise from the NCRA registration process and not use its staff to do NCRA work. While NCRA is mandated to provide information to ECSL by law, it is important to emphasize that no extant law exists that requires ECSL to compulsorily use the data of NCRA as a basis for the voter registration exercise. As a matter of fact, what section 25 (b) of the NCRA Act of 2016 contemplates is the sharing of information by the Director General of NCRA in relation to births, adoptions, deaths, marriages, divorces or nullities to ECSL for the purposes of getting an updated register of

voters for the conduct of public elections and referenda. It did not contemplate the sharing of the entire data of registrants held in the data base of NCRA to ECSL. Also, the purpose for the sharing to ECSL is simple: to update. This presupposes that an original data should have first been generated by ECSL and where there are discrepancies, the data of NCRA would then become relevant for assistance. Sadly, the reverse appears to be true in the on -going voter registration exercise.

- The disenfranchisement and exclusion of persons turning 18 on or before June 23rd 2023 from taking part in the voter registration exercise should be speedily addressed by ECSL. Where practicable, a separate registration system should be generated for these categories of first time voters with proper records taken down of all affected persons in the journal book and receipt given as well. It is important to emphasize that it would amount to violation of their rights as guaranteed under section 31 of the Constitution should ECSL fail to address this problem.
- The 'one centre one computer policy' floated by ECSL must be abandoned forthwith as we go into the second week of the registration process. ECSL must ensure that more computers are procured so that more centres will remain open for the voter registration exercise. This will avert unnecessary delays and inconveniences to the voter registration process.
- ECSL must ensure that in the second week and going forward, centres with large numbers of stations and concentrated voter population are opened so that the pressure will be reduced in the second phase.
- ECSL must carefully review its segmenting of the voter registration exercise into phases so that room for double Registration and corruption does not take place in the registration process.
- Furthermore, where practicable, and due to the incompleteness of NCRA's data, ECSL should try as much as possible to generate a separate and independent data of persons eligible to be registered for the 2023 general elections and not rely of NCRA's data for generating same.
- ECSL must also disallow its staff from registering persons not registered with NCRA at the voter registration centres. Persons not registered with NCRA must first go and register with NCRA before coming for the voter registration process. This will help reduce confusion, unnecessary delays in the registration process and also prevent ECSL from doing the work of NCRA.
- More Registration Centres should be opened in close parameter so that Registrants particularly the sick, aged, suckling mothers, PWDs are not disadvantaged.

- The National Elections Watch (NEW) should endeavor to monitor the voter registration exercise and have stationed monitors within the centres if not all so as to have a third opinion apart from a civil society's perspective.
- Political party agents must always keep an eye on the records of the journal book and receipt slips to have the actual number of registrants per day in the centres
- ECSL must designate one of its staff at the registration centres to be responsible for assisting vulnerable groups such as PWD's, pregnant women, suckling mothers, the aged when they come to register. It should be noted that the obligation is on ECSL and not the Sierra Leone Police to provide assistance to vulnerable groups as per ECSL Disability Policy.
- The need for the urgent purchase of computers and other gadgets relevant for the voter registration exercise cannot be over-emphasized. The argument that ECSL lacks resources is untenable and reveals an outright plan to disenfranchise many from the electioneering process. The incessant delay in the registration process has affected livelihoods, promoted corruption, psychological stress and physical exhaustion for many registrants. This is unacceptable in a democratic society.
- Bribery and corruption looms large in the voter registration process particularly in securing of spaces in the queues organized for the voter registration exercise in many centres. This practice was more akin to centres in the Western Urban areas. Such exploitation of Registrants may not have occurred had ECSL opened up more Registration centres.
- As a future lesson, ECSL should always endeavor to do a pilot survey or a pretest before embarking on any exercise that bears and touches on the electioneering process. This is to proactively identify weakness, and challenges before roll out. The failure of ECSL to conduct a pre-test or pilot survey before relying and /or making use of NCRA's data have exacerbated the problems currently faced in the voter registration process.
- Finally, ECSL must ensure to extend the registration period as far as is practicable to accommodate all eligible persons register for the 2023 elections. This is the case because a lot of the problems encountered in the registration process were the making of ECSL due to the marriage of convenience between them and NCRA.

CONCLUSION

LEGAL LINK is of the firm belief that the right to vote and be voted for is a Constitutional right and that every citizen must be given a fair chance to participate in the registration process leading to the general elections in 2023.

The above report therefore has been done in good faith to help address the myriad of challenges that eclipse the ongoing voter registration process. It is hoped that the government, ECSL, election management bodies, political parties, the civil society community, the international community and the wider public will make use of these report and its finding contained therein to address the challenges affecting the registration process

The monitoring team will however continue its monitoring and issuance of weekly reports capturing improvements as well as challenges right through the voter registration process.

LEGAL LINK remains grateful to ECSL for the accreditations provided to monitor the voter registration exercise and pledges its unflinching support to continue to advocate for and on behalf of the people of Sierra Leone and defend the rights of vulnerable groups in the country.

FAITHFULLY SUBMITTED



RASHID DUMBUYA ESQ

For and on behalf of the LEGAL LINK monitors

CC:

ECSL

ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODIES

POLITICAL PARTIES

THE CIVIL SOCIETY COMMUNITY

THE INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

ABOUT LEGAL LINK

Christian Lawyers Centre (a.k.a LEGAL LINK) is a non-profit legal advocacy group comprising of lawyers, law students and human right activists that seeks to provide legal assistance to religious communities as well as vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone through legal advocacy, education and training, public interest litigations, state and private sector accountability, enforcement of the rule of law and ensuring respect for domestic and international laws that guarantee fundamental human rights and freedoms.

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