

Human Rights Defenders Network Sierra Leone (HRDN-SL)

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PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FREETOWN 29th OCTOBER 2022:

POSITION STATEMENT ON THE PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SYSTEM

The Human Rights Defenders Network – Sierra Leone (HRDN-SL) is a coalition of human rights civil society organizations and individuals working for the promotion and protection of human rights in Sierra Leone.

As an institution working on Human Rights and Elections observation, we welcome ECSL proclamation of an electoral system in favor of a proportional representation which can contribute to a more responsive democracy and national cohesion. The network believes that the decision by the President on the choice of an electoral system in Sierra Leone is constitutional.

However, the network express concerns over the participation of independent candidates and aspirants for both parliamentary and local council's elections as the constitution does not create opportunity for Sierra Leonean who may wish to contest as independent Candidates for parliamentary elections.

Furthermore the network is concerned that the Local Government Act of 2004 does not prescribe a PR system in the conduct of Local Council.

The Network observed that, the Electoral Commission announced the commencement of Boundary Delimitation Exercise for the demarcation of Constituencies and Wards for the purpose of the 2023 general elections in a Press Release dated 2nd August 2022. We also observed that ECSL announced the use of the PR system for the 2023 general elections in a Press Release dated 21st October 2022, which immediately halted the Boundary Delimitation exercise. The Network is with the opinion that to promote Elections integrity and acceptance of

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Elections outcomes, ECSL has a responsibility to communicate to all elections stakeholders the administrative and legal challenges in the conduct of elections and the rationale for use of the PR System

The network therefore calls for the following actions:

ECSL to:

1. Review the situation of independent candidates with a view to enabling them contest in the Proportional Representation system of election;
2. Work with stakeholders to develop constitutional provisions for the conduct of local councils election under the Proportional Representative system of election for the 2023 local councils election;
3. Educate all election stakeholders about administrative and legal challenges that led to the proclamation of the PR system of election for the 2023 general elections.

PARLIAMENT to:

1. Promulgate legislations for the participation of independent candidates for parliamentary elections in the PR system of election for the 2023 parliamentary elections;
2. Promulgate legislations for the conduct of Local Councils election under the PR system of election for the 2023 local councils elections

END

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