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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**"ECC condemns electoral violence perpetrated by supporters of the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) and Unity Party (UP)"**

The Election Coordinating Committee (ECC) condemns, in the strongest term, acts of violence that occurred on August 10, 2023 in Sinkor, Monrovia, Liberia between supporters of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) and the opposition Unity Party (UP). This incident contravenes the spirit and intent of the Farmington River Declaration wherein political parties and presidential candidates vowed to refrain from all forms of violence during the electoral process.

The Farmington Declaration framework requires that all presidential candidates and leaders of political parties should remind their supporters to exercise tolerance, respect the rights of others and conduct themselves in an orderly and peaceful manner during this crucial time of the electoral period. Instilling fear and intimidation against political opponents run counter to the standards and principles of participatory democracy.

In the meantime, the ECC calls on the Liberia National Police (LNP) to conduct a prompt and transparent investigation into the violence which left several persons injured. The ECC further request that the LNP should arrest the perpetrators of the acts and prosecute them in keeping with the doctrine of due process of law. This call in light of the ECC observation that the outcome of pervious incidence of electoral violence has not been made available to the public.

In addition, the ECC wishes to use this medium to remind all political parties and independent candidates that while they have a right to campaign for votes, this right goes with the responsibility to ensure that the rights of other citizens to free movement as guaranteed by the Constitution of Liberia must be respected at all times during this campaign period.

The ECC further urges political parties and independent candidates to campaign based on issues and to refrain from using inflammatory languages or spreading hate speeches during the campaign period.

**Recommendations:**

**To the NEC:**

- The NEC should request from all political parties and independent candidates their plans for campaigning and ensure that their respective schedules do not come in conflict.

**To political parties:**

- All political parties and independent candidates must refrain from street-based campaigning and assemble their supporters in one place to engage them.

**To the LNP:**

- The LNP should demonstrate neutrality and impartiality in providing security to all irrespective of their political alliance.
- That the outcome of the investigation proposed by the ECC be released to the public in a timely manner.
- During this campaign period, the LNP should organize itself to ensure that the rights of citizens to free movement is respected.

**To the International Community/partners:**

- That they seek collective punitive actions against political parties or independent candidates who willfully violate the election laws of Liberia, the Campaign Regulations and the Farmington Declaration.

These elections are vital for the consolidation of the country's fragile and emerging democracy and the ECC notes that electoral violence, whatever form or manner undermines the peace and security of the country. Consequently, the maintenance of internal peace and security is the collective responsibility of state security agencies, particularly the Liberia National Police, political parties, independent candidates and the NEC. Electoral violence has no place in our society if we are to consolidate our fragile peace and democracy.

**About ECC**

The Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC) is Liberia's largest domestic election observation network with diverse competencies, experiences, and expertise in democracy, elections, and governance established since 2010. ECC members include the Center for Democratic Governance (CDG); Center for Media Studies and Peace Building (CEMESP); Center for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding (CECPAP); Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD); Naymote Partners for Democratic Development (NAYMOTE-PADD); West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP), and the Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL). The ECC election observation effort is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). "The contents of this update are the responsibility of the ECC and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government."

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