

**Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC)  
Campaign and Media Monitoring  
2023 General Elections**

**ECC Pre-election Statement  
(October 8, 2023)**

*Released October 8, 2023*

**“ECC calls on all Liberians to turn out on Election Day to vote in a Peaceful Manner”**

*Summary*

In fulfillment of Article 83a of the 1986 Constitution, 2,471,617 Liberians will go to the polls to vote for their president, 15 Senators and 73 members of the House of Representatives. This election will be the fourth consecutive election since the end of the country’s civil war in 2003. In order to consolidate this democratic gain, the ECC calls on all Liberians to conduct themselves peacefully on and after October 10, 2023. This election is critical because of the following reasons:

- This is the first time the National Elections Commission will conduct an election using biometric voter registration system [NOTE: The voting process will continue to be manual].
- Internal peace and security will be provided by state security agencies, specifically members of the Joint Security Task Force (JSTF).
- The NEC will conduct the election with minimum technical assistance from international development partners.
- The government, to a large extent, provided the financial resources for the conduct of the election.

In preparation to observe this election, the ECC observed the Biometric Voter Registration exercise, the nomination of candidates, and the campaign. For the pre-election period, the ECC trained and deployed 92 long-term observers- 19 county coordinators, each assigned to the NEC’s magisterial office and 73 electoral district observers, each representing an electoral district across the 15 counties.

*BVR Observation*

The ECC observed an improved quality of the voter registration process with no systematic attempt by the NEC to exclude any specific group of citizens, denying their right to register in order to vote.

The ECC further observed the systematic trucking of voters in several locations by political actors from one location to another to register. This practice has undermined the principle of representative democracy.

*Political Parties’ Primaries and Candidate Nomination*

Overall, the primaries of political parties were peacefully conducted across the country. Nonetheless, the process of selecting candidates was primarily based on consensus and that women constituted 15% of the total number of candidates certificated by the NEC. This runs contrary to the commitment made by political parties to ensure that at least their candidates list contained 30% women.

The ECC notes that while its observers could access the candidates’ nomination facility, their observation was limited because they were not allowed to observe some of the stages including the scrutiny of the aspirants’ registration package. In some instances, observers were

given a guided tour by NEC officials of the various steps of the nomination exercise rather than being physically present to observe and verify whether all the aspirants complied with the requirements outlined in the legal instruments.

### *Political Campaigns and Media Observation*

The ECC observed two isolated incidents that occurred in District 9, Montserrado County and District 1 in Lofa County, which resulted in the injury and death of partisans from the Coalition for Democratic Change and Unity Party. Despite this, the campaign process was peaceful and political parties and independent candidates were not denied the use of public facilities. However, the campaign was characterized by the use of inflammatory speeches by political actors and the destruction of campaign materials of political parties and independent candidates. The ECC further notes the endorsement by traditional leaders and religious groups of certain political actors thereby compromising their role as peace brokers in mediating any conflict arising from the electoral process.

### *Electoral Security*

The ECC notes that reports from electoral violence investigated by the Liberian National Police have not been made available to the public and perpetrators are yet to be held accountable. This has the tendency to reinforce the public perception of mistrust in the security apparatus.

### *ECC Election Day Observation and Deployment Methodology*

ECC has trained and deployed 1,500 election day observers for the general elections on October 10, 2023 as well as 92 long-term supervisors and coordinators in counties and electoral districts of Liberia. Of the 1500 STOs, 1200 will be stationary observers, each stationed at a single polling place throughout election day and until the ballots are counted and results posted; Stationary observers have been instructed to observe at the polling place where they are registered to vote. The remaining 300 STOs will serve as mobile observers, moving around within their electoral district while observing and reporting on the overall electoral environment, including security response to violence. 73 of the 92 long-term observers are electoral district supervisors who are responsible for managing and ensuring that all short-term observers are properly deployed in their respective districts and polling places. These electoral district supervisors will oversee, but they will also observe and immediately report any serious incidents they observe. Finally, the 19 county coordinators will serve as Tally observers, and will be deployed at the 19 NEC magisterial offices to observe the tally/tabulation of results from the various voting precincts.

The ECC will issue two statements on its observation of election day. The first statement will be issued on election day highlighting observation findings of the opening and set-up of observed polling places. The second is a preliminary statement which will focus on voting, closing, counting, and tabulation of results.

### *Post-election Observation*

The ECC will deploy observers to observe the tallying exercise at all magisterial offices across the country to assess the level of transparency of the process. The ECC will further observe the filing and adjudication of all electoral petitions arising from the conduct of the election.

**Recommendations:** The ECC proposes the following recommendations:

To NEC:

- Communicate to the public an update on the level of preparedness before the election day, including distribution of sensitive and non-sensitive materials as well as the readiness of polling staff to deploy adequately to their polling places on election day.
- The NEC is encouraged to enforce the campaign regulations by ensuring that all political parties take down their campaign billboards and materials in line with the official campaign timeline and respect the silence day before the elections.
- Communicate to the public in a timely manner on any challenges faced during election and the tallying and transmission of election results.

To Political Parties:

- All political parties are reminded to take down their campaign billboards and materials today, at 11:59 pm as stated by the campaign regulations
- That political party ensure the proper deployment of party agents on election day to observe the voting, tallying and transmission of results.
- Parties and candidates are also encouraged to inform their supporters to turn out peacefully to vote on election day.

To Security:

- Conduct its electoral security operations in a professional and non-partisanship manner.

To Media:

- Refrain from disseminating inflammatory, disinformation and misinformation that has the tendency to instill fear in the population.

## **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's 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) and Irish-Aid. "The contents of this update are the responsibility of the ECC and does not necessarily reflect the views of USAID, the United States Government or the Government of Ireland."

## **CONTACT**

**For More Information Contact:**

***Cllr. Oscar Bloh, ECC Chairperson @ 0886554109; ECC Secretariat @ 0775186929 or [jbwatchie@gmail.com](mailto:jbwatchie@gmail.com)***

***Email: [eccsecretariat2011@gmail.com](mailto:eccsecretariat2011@gmail.com); Website: [eccliberiacom.org](http://eccliberiacom.org)***