

Peace, Security and Development Update

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INEC Billboard - Murray Town, © Ali Rajab, Icon Graphics



Centre For Development
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conciliation
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Note of Welcome

Let me take this opportunity to introduce the Peace, Security and Development Update: a bi-monthly publication from the partners of the Strengthening Citizens Security in Sierra Leone project, funded by the Department for International Development (DFID).

The Centre for Development and Security Analysis (CEDSA) is the lead partner working with Conciliation Resources (CR) for the production and dissemination of this update, which serves to provide an open space for discussion on issues of security and hopes to invite a public interest in such matters.

The Update is devoted to the analysis of issues bordering on security, peace, democracy and development in Sierra

Leone and the Mano River sub-region in particular. This first issue looks at preparations for the 2007 elections in Sierra Leone. The feature articles examine the Sierra Leone Political Parties Code of Conduct, the role of women in the elections, elections security challenges and the security preparedness for the elections. We hope that this first edition provides an informative account of various aspects of the upcoming elections and that, as readers, you will continue to take an interest in subsequent editions.

Osman Gbla
Founder, CEDSA
June 2007

Adherence to the Sierra Leone Political Code of Conduct and Elections 2007

Charles Silver¹

One of the most problematic issues that confronts democracy in most newly independent African states is electoral violence. In the case of Sierra Leone, some observers still argue that the introduction of a single party constitution in 1978 with its attendant political alienation and marginalization, contributed largely towards the outbreak of the civil war. This matter is debatable, but what seems to be the kernel of such an argument, is that the more credible and acceptable the outcome of an electoral process, the greater the chances of peace and that the ensuing government will mobilize national development.

Given Sierra Leone's troubling experiences with party politics in general and electoral processes in particular, most observers still have reservations as to whether political parties are willing to abide by the rules governing the game. In order to restore hope and confidence in the people and, more importantly, to commit political parties to the electoral rules, the government of Sierra Leone saw it politically prudent to establish a Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) to complement the activities of the National Electoral Commission (NEC).

As part of its mandate to harmonize relations between contending political parties, the PPRC, in consultation with registered political parties for the forthcoming 2007 general and Presidential election, put together a political parties' code of conduct. To most Sierra Leoneans, the code is a timely and crucial complement to the existing electoral laws. The day of planning, however, is different from the day of contest. In other words, how ready and willing are political parties to adhere to the stipulations of the code of conduct? Should they renege on their promises and responsibilities? What will be the next step? What alternative measures need to be adopted to ensure that political parties strictly adhere to the code of conduct?

The Political Parties Code of Conduct: A Critical Analysis

The code of conduct covers almost all the crucial areas of concern, such as intimidation and violence, campaigning, compliance with the laws and electoral process, public and collective subscription to the code et cetera. Having said that, attention should be drawn to the fact that this code of conduct can hardly serve its intended purpose(s) if mechanisms are not put in place to ensure strict adherence by political parties. The analysis in this paper focuses primarily on this aspect.

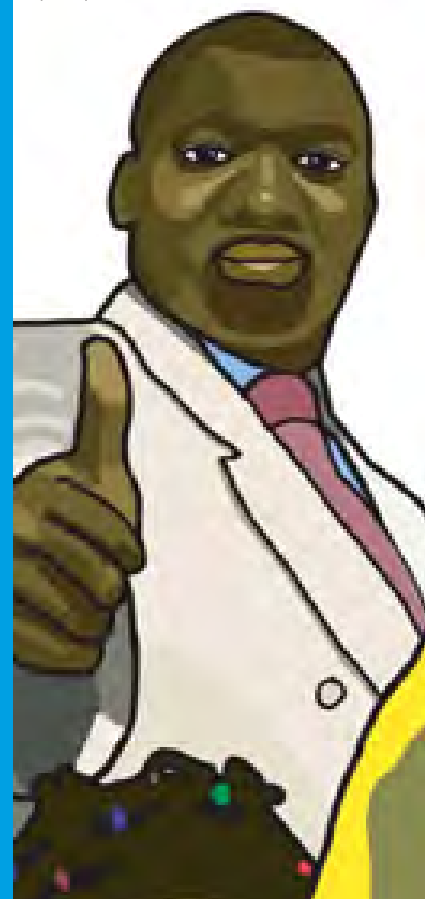
One of the sub-headings of the code of conduct is: 'Communication and Monitoring: Adherence to the Code'. As this sub-heading implies, adherence to the code is contingent upon levels of communication and monitoring. To ensure this, the following undertakings were made:

- (i) All political parties that have subscribed to the code will make every effort to maintain communication with other political parties also subscribed;
- (ii) An aggrieved party/candidate/supporter may submit a written complaint addressed to the secretary of the PPRC;
- (iii) A committee chaired by the PPRC and comprising representatives of political parties, as well as other stakeholders in society, will serve as a forum for discussion of issues of common concern; including breaches of the code before, during and after the elections;
- (iv) Civil society and the media shall ensure the dissemination of the issues raised in the code throughout the country.

Taking a critical look at the crucial issue of adherence to the code of conduct, one wonders what will follow in the case of non-compliance by a political party? This is worthy of note since the code of conduct is not clear on issues of non-compliance. All that is stated is that all political parties that have subscribed to the code of conduct are bound by the code and that the leadership of respective parties should instruct the party officials, candidates, members and supporters to observe the code and ensure compliance. One assumption emerging from this aspect of the code is that the viability and indeed adherence to the code depends largely on the degree of political tolerance and discipline inherent in the political parties themselves.



Artwork Supplied by:
(NEC) National Electoral Commission



This seems plausible since the code provides no legal authority for the PPRC to coerce political parties or their supporters into adherence. This being the case, how disciplined and politically tolerant are political parties in Sierra Leone? More importantly, how can one reconcile the assurances entailed in the code with the incidents of electoral malpractice and intimidation of political opponents? How can the PPRC, and the political parties they are seeking to regulate, account for horrifying headlines such as that in the For di People's Newspaper of Tuesday 1 May 2007, which read: 'As Party Thugs Stone Freetown City Council, SLPP vows to kill APC Organizing Secretary'? No matter what side of the political fence one sits on, these, and other awful pronouncements, whether real or fabricated, should be treated with seriousness. This is because such inflammatory statements hint at a lack of credibility and acceptability of the election results, and thus pose a potential threat to ongoing post-war peacebuilding.

Political parties need to be policy, not rhetoric, oriented. In focusing on well-defined policies to market to the people, less time will be devoted to the frivolous behaviours of intimidating and threatening opponents, destructive criticisms and rumoured attempts to rig elections. Presentation of well articulated programmes to the electorate increases the prospects of informed political decision making, not only at elections, but also afterwards. In this paper, therefore, I hypothesize that adherence to the political parties code of conduct can best be guaranteed if the electorate is adequately capacitated to question the activities of party leaders, candidates and their supporters, based on the stipulations of the code. Such a capacity can be encouraged by a policy-oriented campaign that gives the electorate tangible and relevant options to consider, rather than using rhetoric and dirty politics that stimulate factional fighting and potential violence.

Alternative approaches to Enhance Adherence to the Code

As the code of conduct lacks legal authority to enforce punitive measures in the case of non-compliance, the provisions made for monitoring should be effectively utilized. The electorate themselves can be actively and objectively involved in the monitoring process to improve accountability. This can be attained through intensive electoral education and increased awareness and understanding of the code.

Political parties should be encouraged to adopt stringent measures that promote adherence to the code of conduct at party level. Such measures should be succinctly articulated to the public who will in turn evaluate the activities of political parties and their supporters, based on their own internal guiding principles.

The NEC should adopt measures through which prospective political parties not only tender manifestoes, but also a comprehensive programme of events, as one of the prerequisites for registration. This, in my view, will minimize the neo-patrimonialistic tendencies and encourage the more useful, policy-based campaigning. Translation of the code of conduct into local languages will also help in facilitating an understanding of the code amongst the broader population.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the civil populace should not only be empowered but also encouraged to hold party leaders to account and, in extreme circumstances, deny loyalty to a candidate, who acts contrary to the code of conduct. I consider this as one of the best means to ensuring adherence to the code, given the fact that the ultimate goal of every political party is either to stay in power, or attain it. The most appropriate instrument for regulating the activities of political parties is through the electorate itself, as they are the most indispensable client no politician can afford to lose.

The Role of Women in the Electoral Process

Marcella Macauley²

By the end of the 2007 elections, Sierra Leone will be accredited as one of the few states in sub-Saharan Africa where a woman has led the country to another democratic epoch as the head of the electoral commission. This development, among others, points to the emerging roles women are assuming in the electoral process in the country.

Positive Strides for Elections 2007

As the processes for the August 2007 elections unfold, it is clearly evident that the women of Sierra Leone are making vibrant strides to impact the process. Records to date show that 48 per cent of the total numbers of registrants are women and, through the 50/50 Group, proper coordination of aspiring women is in progress. In addition, there are a host of initiatives amongst women's groups and other institutions to support the objective of increased women's participation in the electoral process.

Within political parties, few women currently hold key decision making positions, rather being limited to positions within the women's

wings. It is also disappointing that there is no indication of a female political leader or secretary-general in all of the eight registered political parties.

Training workshops are ongoing to design strategies for more successful involvement of women in the process from both state and non-state actors. Notably, the newly created Political Party Registration Commission (PPRC), with support from UNIOSIL and UNDP, organised regional workshops across the country with the aim of bringing women representatives together to formulate strategies to increase female participation. Specifically, the focus was on improving lobbying skills to allow for stronger participation of women in their political parties and the 11 August elections more generally.

Women in various political parties are now lobbying their party colleagues for 30 per cent representation within the party. It is envisaged that since the Parliamentary elections will be constituency based, women will be able to muster support within their localities to fill Parliamentary positions in a more positive manner. In the past, their nominations into

Parliament have been determined by party lists, over which they exercise little control. However, notwithstanding these positive developments, a host of concerns still linger which could potentially not only hinder women assuming their respective roles in the process, but will equally limit the desired objective of increased participation.

Challenges to Women's Participation

As the nomination period draws closer, there are no indications of any female aspirants for the presidency, and there seems no likelihood that any will emerge. The drive for a woman to contest such a sensitive position is hindered by years of stereotyping, which have formed the bedrock for women's relegation to the backseat. Women themselves are conditioned to lack confidence, and are yet to support other women in elections. This situation is closely tied with the barrier of traditional beliefs, customs and conventions, which have shaped our socio-political culture. In the homes there are gender roles which determine the responsibilities of the girl and boy child. Thus women's disempowerment finds expression in harmful traditional and discriminatory cultural and customary practices. Men have dominated existing political structures at all levels from state authority, political parties, as well as in traditional and local governance. In the Northern Province, traditional norms prevent women from becoming paramount chiefs, thus limiting them in reaching their full potential. Within this framework, politics is predominantly designed for men. In most political parties, the purpose of creating a women's wing was to devise an entity which could address the issues that directly affect women and to enact change. A further concern stems from the continued existence of the women's wing, which has also served to keep female party faithfuls marginal from mainstream politics. Women are overwhelmingly represented within the female entity, thus inhibiting them from assuming non-gender specific roles within their political parties. This, in essence, has indirectly affected the upward mobility of most renowned female members within political parties.

It cannot be disputed that women's disproportionate poverty also limits their competitiveness and their roles in election. They have to compete for party tickets with wealthy and renowned male party stalwarts who, have the capacity to buy votes if they wish to do so. The resounding question is: where are the funds for women to mount expensive campaigns like their male compatriots? For the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections, electoral colleges have been created within political parties, having the mandate to choose party representatives to run for political offices. Most of the electoral colleges created are male dominated, again highlighting the obstacles of gender that female aspirants must overcome.

Equally worrying is the issue of information access. For effective participation in the electoral process, every eligible voter needs the required information, from registration up until polling day. Such information must contain the manifestoes of candidates and the political parties, so that the electorate can make an informed decision. In Sierra Leone, women cannot always readily access such information, due to the high levels of illiteracy among womenfolk.

The table presents a synopsis of the present situation regarding women's leadership responsibilities in Sierra Leone. The situation is still gloomy and needs considerable improvement. If elections are the entry point for key democratic decisions, then more effort needs to be put in this direction.

women make your mark



Positions	Total Number	Number of Women
Ministers	20	3
Deputy Ministers	10	3
Councillors	423	60
District Chairpersons/Mayors	19	1
Parliamentarians	124	16
Ambassadors	23	3

Recommendations to foster sustained participation of women

From the above analysis it has become evident that there are a host of factors that limit the participation of women in political processes. Against this backdrop, political parties must assume the affirmative action of 30 per cent representation of women and this should be further enhanced by both reserving some party offices for women and leaving some constituencies to be filled exclusively by women. Following from the latter, the positive developments for women's empowerment already in progress must be sustained and backed by the required legislation.

The second recommendation concerns the issue of political financing for women. Women's capacity building and empowerment to run for political offices must not stop at training. NGO's empowering women must ensure that within their programmes, funds are allocated to them for publicity materials in order to gain visibility during the campaign period.

Lastly, those women who are participating in the electoral process as voters must be given the leverage to choose the parties and candidates they wish to support. In the past, husbands and heads of households determine who or what parties their dependents must support. It must be pointed out that democratic process prescribes that eligible voters participate as individuals in elections.

In the final analysis, all these efforts will feed into addressing the question of systemic exclusion of women, who constitute over half of the Sierra Leonean population, from the political arena. Taking these considerations onboard, the 2007 elections could prove to be the most non-discriminatory and gender-fair Sierra Leone has held.



“developments for women’s empowerment already in progress must be sustained and backed...” Marcella Macauley



"Sierra Leone: voting line." Online Photograph. Encyclopædia Britannica. Online. 11 June 2007.

Security Challenges in Sierra Leone's 2007 Elections

Osman Gbla³

As a country emerging from the throes of violent conflict and about to conduct elections in August 2007, Sierra Leone is faced with a number of security challenges. These challenges are not only emerging from the internal dynamics of the country, but also from the realities of the Mano River Union (MRU) sub-region. Prominent among many of these security challenges are the high levels of unemployed youth; potential acrimony between the major political parties; ensuring the safety of polling stations; ensuring that contesting parties adhere to election rules; ensuring free, fair and transparent elections; putting in place mechanisms for addressing election petitions and other grievances and the broader MRU sub-regional insecurity.

There is no doubt that Sierra Leone's major security challenge, especially in efforts to ensure free, fair and peaceful elections in 2007, is putting in place a proactive programme to prevent the use of youth, by contesting political parties, to cause mayhem. Meeting this challenge should be a priority for a number of reasons. In the first place, the country's population is dominated by young people (about 45 per cent), who have the energy and drive to not only contribute to development, but also to destabilize the state, as was evident in their use by various warring factions during the war. Second, it is estimated that up to 70 per cent of the youths of the country are un- or under-employed. The 2002 poverty profile of Sierra Leone showed that

youth aged between 15 and 24 are amongst the poorest of the country's poor. The presence of such high numbers of unemployed youth has the potential to pose a serious security threat to the conduct of free and peaceful elections, as precedents of youth violence during previous elections in the country show. Coupled with the fact that most of the parties contesting the elections have youth wings, most of which are not properly sensitized to a culture of peace and tolerant political competition, there is a need for a serious security strategy to contain these youths.

Another major election security challenge is to prevent the emerging confrontational stance between the major political parties degenerating into violence. This scenario is especially visible in the current political relationships between the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) and the Political Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), on the one hand, and between the SLPP and the All People's Party on the other. The recent incidents of (APC) supporters clashing with SLPP supporters during rallies in Freetown are warning signs of such a threat.

It is in this regard that programmes like the Elections 2007 Discussion Series, organised by the Political Science Department of Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, are laudable in creating a forum for dialogue between the parties and citizens. The discussions have been able to bring together representatives of political parties to a common table to discuss their programmes. These forums have been encouraging, with the party representatives demonstrating political tolerance. The leaders and supporters of these parties should adhere to the three P's prescription of the

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Mano River Women's Peace Network, urging them to Pursue Power Peacefully (The New Citizen, Thursday 24 May 2007, p.12).

Ensuring the safety of the various polling stations is also another election security challenge that is worthy of discussion. Meeting this challenge will not only allow citizens to exercise their franchise in a conducive environment devoid of threat and intimidation, but will also lend credence to the results of the elections, as ballot boxes will be secured to avoid rigging and other malpractices. In addition to having civil society groups providing election monitors at polling stations to ensure accountability, there is also a need for efficient security at the stations.

Free, fair and peaceful elections will also be more likely if political parties adhere to electoral rules, in particular the Political Parties Code of Conduct. If political parties fail to adhere to electoral rules and the rule of law, the potential for violence will be heightened. There have been cases of electoral violence and other forms of election malpractices in the country in the past, owing largely to the failure of political parties to adhere to electoral rules.

Another security challenge of the elections will be facilitating due process in lodging election grievances and petitions in the post-election period. There are likely to be various forms of contestations by some political parties after the 11 August poll date. The issue

then is how are mechanisms put in place to address such contestations? Following due process, it is the courts that carry out this function, operating in a fair and independent manner.

The 2007 elections in Sierra Leone are also more likely to be peaceful if serious efforts are taken to ensure the stability of the MRU sub-region, comprising Guinea, Liberia, Côte D'Ivoire and Sierra Leone. This sub-region does not only have porous borders, but has also been a conduit for the easy movement of small arms and armed groups. Although the conduct of peaceful elections and progress towards stabilization in Liberia is encouraging, the fragile security and political situation in both Guinea and Cote D'Ivoire are worrisome. Additionally, the unresolved territorial issue between Guinea and Sierra Leone, over the border village of Yenga in the Eastern part of Sierra Leone, is also a potential flashpoint that needs consideration.

This article has highlighted the various security challenges posed by the elections of 2007 in Sierra Leone and proposed ways of meeting these challenges. Against this security background, efforts should be made to proactively address the issues of youth unemployment, political intolerance, disregard for the rule of law and electoral laws and sub-regional insecurity. In this way, peace and transparency may be maximized to facilitate successful elections.

The purpose of election security is to support the National Electoral Commission (NEC), responsible for conducting the elections, in providing a safe environment in which people can exercise their democratic right to vote. The Office of National Security (ONS), through the National Security Council Coordinating Group (NSCCG) structure, will be the coordinating institution between NEC and the security agencies.

The SLP will be the key security provider throughout the elections and for this reason, training sessions for dealing with public order disturbances have been ongoing, with the aim of sharpening the professionalism of the SLP. Acknowledging that fear of electoral disturbances may exceed the likelihood of such disturbances actually taking place, the SLP has embarked on an outreach strategy to assure the public that they are professional enough to police the elections effectively. For example, a conference was held from 30 – 31 August 2006, focusing on the neutrality of the SLP and its role throughout the elections. Valuable relationships have also been forged between the SLP and other key stakeholders to ensure that a safe and secure environment will be created for the smooth conduct of the elections. Key partners include: the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC); the All Political Parties Association (APPA); ONS; the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) and several other civil society groups.

The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) (being focused, as they are, on external security), will only operate in support of the SLP, who will be responsible for the maintenance of the rule of law. Such support is only requested in extreme circumstances, and through a structured procedure – 'the military aid to civil power' (MACP). This is not to suggest that there has been no joint planning between the SLP and RSLAF. The two institutions interact at various committee levels, both strategically (NSCCG, Provincial and District Security Committees) and operationally (Joint Coordination Committee, Incident Command Centres and Forward Control Points). Ultimate responsibility, however, falls under the SLP's mandate.

In the lead up to the 2007 elections, the primary internal security provider, the SLP, is taking important steps in ensuring a hospitable environment in which to conduct the polls. This will be the litmus test for Sierra Leone's post-conflict recovery and an opportunity for the SLP to display their competence and professionalism.

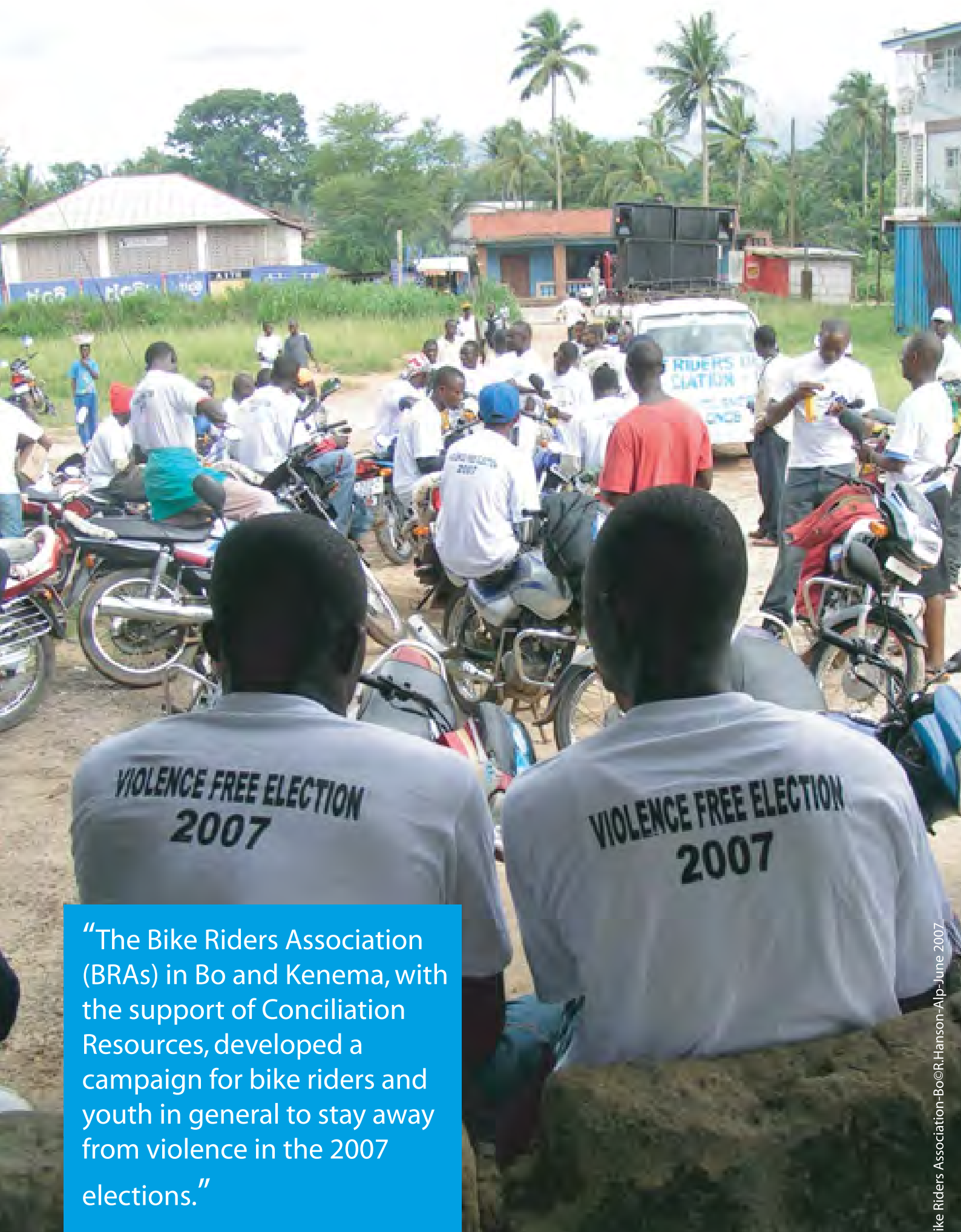


Security Readiness for the 2007 Sierra Leone Election

Lawrence L. Bassie⁴

Planning for the security of the 2007 elections is underway and security agencies are preparing for this important challenge. The Sierra Leone Police Force (SLP), in collaboration with other stakeholders and partners, will provide the safe and secure environment for the smooth conduct of the Presidential and Parliamentary elections in August. A comprehensive election security strategy has been developed by the SLP and exercises conducted to hone their response effectiveness. Threats to the election are constantly being assessed, revised and updated by the Office of National Security, and fed into the overall planning machinery of the SLP.

⁴ Lawrence L. Bassie is the Director of Operations for the Office of National Security, Sierra Leone.



“The Bike Riders Association (BRAs) in Bo and Kenema, with the support of Conciliation Resources, developed a campaign for bike riders and youth in general to stay away from violence in the 2007 elections.”

NEC's Preparations for Sierra Leone's 2007 Elections

Dr. Hindowa Batilo Momoh¹

The National Electoral Commission (NEC), which is Sierra Leone's Election Management Body (EMB), has as its stated objective the statutory responsibility to conduct all public elections in the country, including Presidential and Parliamentary/Legislative Elections; Local Government (Council) Elections; Paramount Chieftaincy Elections and Referenda.

Notwithstanding regime type, Sierra Leone has always had an EMB responsible for the management and administration of elections since the end of colonialism in 1961. In March 2000 the National Electoral Commission replaced the former Interim National Election Commission, which had been established by the military regime of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). The NEC Act was passed in 2000, which gave statutory powers to the Commission to recruit its own staff and to conduct the 2002 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. Following some lapses and tax in the Commission, President Kabbah disbanded the Commissioners and, in consultation with all Registered Political Parties, appointed new members that were later approved by Parliament. The objective was to make the Commission professional, to restore public confidence in the electoral process and to guarantee the autonomy of the Commission in the discharge of its duties. The process set in motion the complete overhaul and restructuring of NEC with a view to the 2007 elections, to ensure that they would meet national and international standards, as well as be acceptable to Sierra Leoneans.

Restructuring Processes

Staff Recruitment

Guided by NEC's Reform Programme of 2005-2008, coupled with the Commission's Resolution No.1 of 2005, comprehensive transformation of the Commission began in earnest. Commencing in July 2005, the restructuring process was preceded by the establishment of the Transitional Support Secretariat (TSS), tasked to oversee the transitional phase, especially the recruitment of staff and drawing up of administrative manuals.

The body responsible for recruiting the Commission's staff in the past has been the Public Service Commission. Former staff were returned to the Establishment Secretary's office for re-absorption into the civil service, making way for a new, professional NEC staff. The process paved the way for the TSS to advertise all vacant positions. About 2,700 applications were received for 45 positions and after short listing, 413 sat examinations. A total number of 85 professional staff were recruited after a grueling recruitment process that involved members from the United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone, TSS and NEC Commissioners.

Staff Capacity Building

The decade long violence that engulfed Sierra Leone in the 1990s certainly precipitated the exodus of many Sierra Leoneans, leaving the capacity of most of those who braved the conflict severely depleted. Consequently, the Commission was required to embark on a series of training and capacity strengthening exercises in its bid to build a competent, professional and well-deserving cadre of election officers for the 2007 elections.

The training and workshop sessions were climaxed by the internationally accredited training program, Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE). The BRIDGE training aimed to provide election officers with the required knowledge and skills in areas of election management and administration, such as types of electoral systems, project management, boundary delimitation, voter education, public outreach and strategies for sustainability. The modules were targeted to prepare and empower election officers in Sierra Leone to independently implement electoral activities as the country prepares to revert to constituency-based or the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) election system.

Boundary Delimitation

The NEC has the constitutional mandate to demarcate electoral constituency boundaries and to review them at intervals of 'no less than five years and not more than seven years'. The last time constituency boundaries were demarcated was in 1985 when the country was preparing for the 1986 elections. Between 1985 and 2002, successive political upheavals, military coups, the mindless rebellion and the many politico-socio-economic challenges facing post-war Sierra Leone, made it impossible for the conduct of elections based on the FPTP system. Rather, the Proportional Representative system (PR) was in vogue in the 1996 elections while the District Block Representative (DBR) system was put in place for the 2002 Parliamentary elections.

The conditions (for example, lack of reliable population information for delimitation and lack of access to rebel controlled areas) that precipitated the utilisation of the PR and DBR systems in 1996 and 2002 respectively, are no longer justifications for the use of such systems. In tandem with the constitutional provisions, there was a popular call by Sierra Leoneans to return to constituency based elections because of their representation and accountability. With constituencies not having been delimited since 1985 and with the difficulties of the housing and population census of 2004, the demarcation of constituency boundaries in preparations for credible elections in 2007 became necessary.

The process, which started in 2005, was climaxed by a litany of events such as setting up of Boundary Delimitation Task Force, a Study Tour to Ghana and Botswana for Best Practices, Parliamentary approval of 112 single members of Parliament, a Memorandum of Understanding between NEC and Statistics Sierra Leone (SSL) and a nation-wide public consultation, culminating in the final delimitation exercise in September 2006.

The process succeeded, in large part, due to cooperation of major stakeholders, the general public and the meaningful contribution of the Commission's international partners, especially UNDP. With the completion of the demarcation process, the ground was prepared for the registration.

Voter Registration

Though technically and financially expensive and expansive, time consuming and exhausting, voter registration (VR) was a key event on Sierra Leone's electoral calendar. During the 2004 census, populations were displaced and dislocated, with many out of the country and a visibly fluctuating demography. It became appropriate for the Commission to register old and new voters to upgrade the old

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Artwork Supplied by:
(NEC) National Electoral Commission

“...voter registration (VR) was a key event in Sierra Leone’s electoral calendar...”

Dr. Hindowa Batilo Momoh

register and to prepare, as planned, the preparation of a permanent voter register that would be all inclusive for the 2007 elections.

In preparation of a credible and transparent voter registration process to meet acceptable international standards for democratic elections, the Commission developed a voter registration operation plan for the exercise. The plan outlined NEC's objectives and strategy for the VR exercise, which included:

- Legal and Organisational Framework
- Voter Registration Preparation
- Voter's registration Process
- Voter Registration Security

VR in Sierra Leone, which lasted three weeks, was a huge success. Over 90% of eligible voters registered and few incidences of malpractice were discovered. Sierra Leoneans will vote on polling day, August 11 2007, in the same centres where they have registered, and the Voters' Register will be publicised nationwide as soon as it has been finalised.

E. Voter/Civic Education and Public Sensitisation

During the several months since its restructuring, the Commission has embarked on a robust voter education and nation-wide sensitisation programme for the elections. The exercise aims at galvanising the enthusiasm and interests of the masses in the ongoing political discourse and to combat voter apathy amongst eligible voters. In the cities, the media, jingles, radio talk shows and other forms of voter education have been used to reach the public. In the rural communities, community theatres and town criers have been on hand to assist in voter education.

The Commission generally, and the Voter Education and Public

Outreach Unit specifically, have targeted groups and members of political platforms in the country, especially out of school youths, civil society groups, political parties, paramount chiefs, womens associations, the media and many others. The objective, as stated above, is to educate and keep the public well informed about electoral activities as they unravel in the Commission. It also aims to bring the stakeholders closer to the electoral process through engagements that ensure their active participation, thus guaranteeing indigenous ownership of the process. The establishment of the Political Parties Liaison Committee and the Civil Society Committee are cases in point.

Equally worth noting are the monthly press conferences organised by the Unit. These are interactive sessions where the Commission converses with members of the fourth estate on electoral issues, and asks and answers questions with the view to inform and educate the public. The Commission also undertakes TV and Radio interviews with the aim of keeping people informed about NEC's preparations for the elections. The voter education and public sensitisation is ongoing and indispensable to conducting meaningful elections.

F. Funding Sources

The estimated cost for the 2007 elections is about US\$28,000,000. The government of Sierra Leone has committed one-third of the budget while international partners have pledged to contribute the remaining two-thirds.

Government contributions have come in two forms: remittances through the Ministry of Finance and in-kind contributions from government agencies such as Statistics Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone Roads Authority, Ministry of Works and Technical Maintenance, Law

"The Sierra Leone Police are well prepared to provide security to all parts of the country..." Dr. Hindowa Batilo Momoh





Georma Jargo, Sowa Chiefdom ©R.Hanson-Alp-2007

“the 2007 elections could prove to be the most non discriminatory and gender-fair ...”

Marcella Macauley

Reform Commission, National Commission for Democracy and so on. These contributions have greatly aided the Commission in meeting their necessary costs. Funds received from the SLG are managed at NECHQ by the Commission’s Finance Unit.

Contributions from the International Commission (largely for electoral materials and electoral expenses) are being managed by the UNDP-established Project Management Unit (PMU). The PMU is closely guided by a Steering Committee, which provides strategic guidance, as well as allowing for better coordination amongst donors contributing to the electoral process. Among the major donors are: DFID, UNDP, Irish Aid, the EU, the German and Chinese Governments and the Consulate of Serbia and Montenegro. Members of the Steering Committee are drawn from NEC and representatives from development partners, government and one from civil society.

Conclusion

The 2007 elections are the first real post-war elections in Sierra Leone, in that they are the first to be conducted without robust international security arrangements. Only a skeletal UN force under the auspices of UNIOSIL is operative in Sierra Leone. Further, the 2007 elections will be conducted on the First-Past-the-Post model, suggesting that civil order has returned to most, if not all parts of the country.

With professionalisation of staff, delimitation of constituency boundaries, sensitisation of the polity and registration of voters, with the exhibition and enquiry periods completed and the procurement process for polling materials well underway, the Commission is ready to conduct credible elections on August 11. International observers from the Commonwealth, the African Union and ECOWAS, coupled with domestic observers, have expressed interest to observe and monitor the polls as well as all of the electoral processes leading to August 11 2007. The Procedures and External Relations Unit have prepared accreditations and procedures for election observation for both international and domestic observers ahead of the elections.

The Sierra Leone Police are well prepared to provide security to all parts of the country on polling day and they are currently providing logistical/security services leading up to the polls. Under the auspices of the Office of National Security (ONS), NEC is involved in the risk and general security assessment of the country. The arrangement is designed to foreshadow potential national security threats and to nip them in the bud should they arise. With logistical, legal, financial and security arrangements in place, one can infer that the National Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone is ready to conduct the first post-war elections in Sierra Leone on August 11 2007.



Koromansilla, Koinadugu©R.Hanson-Alp-July 2005

“...ensure free, fair and peaceful elections in 2007...”

Osman Gbla



Centre For Development and Security Analysis (CEDSA)

The Centre for Development and Security Analysis (CEDSA) is a strategic and timely research institution established in 2000 with a view to consolidating peace and contributing to long-term socio-economic and political stability in post war Sierra Leone, in particular, and West Africa in general. Given the cross-territorial dimension of development and security, CEDSA's vision transcends the frontiers of Sierra Leone to include the Mano River Union countries and West African subregion. The Centre's approach seeks to ensure a more critical and informed intervention in its quest to contribute towards a stable, peaceful and thriving socio-economic and political environment in the African Continent. CEDSA's vision and mission are as follows:

Vision: A developed African continent in a secure, stable, democratic and peaceful environment

Mission: To contribute to the realisation of sustainable development, peace and stability in Africa through informed research, capacity building and advocacy

Major programme areas:

- Security
- Governance
- Conflicts and Peace building
- Youth Development and Child Protection
- Gender, Environment and HIV/AIDS

Ongoing Activities:

- Collaborative research with the Rehabilitation and Research Centre Denmark on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Sierra Leone
- Training of young researchers in conflict analysis, peace building, security and development
- Engaging in student debate series on issues of peace, security, democracy and development
- Networking with relevant national, regional and international academic and research institutions working in the areas of peace, security, democracy and development
- Monthly Peace, Security and Development Round Tables
- Bi-Monthly Peace, Security and Development Update, jointly implemented with Conciliation Resources

conciliation resources

Conciliation Resources is an independent charity with over a decade of experience working internationally to prevent and resolve violent conflict, promote justice and build lasting peace. Our practical work is guided by the needs of people living in countries affected or threatened by war. CR has been active in the West Africa region since 1995, working to support community-based organisations and NGOs in their efforts to transform conflict.

Our goals are to:

Support People working at local, national and international levels to develop effective solutions to social, economic and political problems related to violent conflicts

Provide Opportunities for inclusive dialogue and improved relationships within communities and across conflict divides at all social and political levels

Influence Governments and other decision makers to employ conflict transformation policies that promote alternatives to violence

Improve Peacemaking Practice and policies by promoting learning from peace processes around the world

Challenge Stereotypes and increase public awareness of human rights, conflict and peace issues in divided societies

A Conciliation Resources and Centre for Development and Security Analysis Publication

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