



## **National Early Warning System (NEWS)**

### **Situation Report on the Mitigation of Threats to the peaceful conduct of the 2018 General Elections in Sierra Leone**

*November 2017*

#### **Introduction**

This situation report highlights several manifestations of election related violence in November including destruction and damage of property; assault; protest action by SLPP supporters against the Police, inter party disputes, partisanship by paramount chiefs as well as detention and intimidation.

The major incident for the month was the arrest and detention of the SLPP Publicity Secretary, Mr. Lehai Lawrence Leema over allegations of his violent actions at the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service of November 6, 2017. It is alleged that Mr. Leema forcibly entered the studio during an SLBC morning program, demanding a right to participate in a live program to respond to Frankly Rogers of the All Peoples Congress allegations against the SLPP presidential candidate, Rtd. Brigadier Julius Maada Bio.

Also in November, the ECOWAS Court of Justice ruled that the removal of former Vice President Sam Sumana from office in 2015 by President Ernest Koroma, violated his fundamental human rights to fair hearing and to participate in politics as guaranteed by the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. The Court ordered Sierra Leone to pay the Vice President all his salaries and emoluments from the time of removal to date.

The National Electoral Commission commenced the distribution of voter identity cards to 3,178,000 registered voters from November 25-December 1, 2017.

## **The Current Election Security Threats in Sierra Leone**

### **Physical Violence and Destruction of Properties**

- On 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017, it was reported that the SLPP Publicity Secretary, Lahai Lawrence Lemah attacked some SLBC staff as he sought the right to be hosted as a guest on a live program during the “Morning Coffee Show” to respond to accusations raised by Mr. Francklyn Rogers of APC who was on air alleging that his mother’s house in Tehun situated at Bonth District was attacked on Sunday night on the instruction of the SLPP Flag bearer, Julius Maada Bio.
- On 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017, there was a violent confrontation between the supporters of the APC and the SLPP over destruction of posters of rival Presidential Candidates. The incident took place around the Eastern part of Freetown. At least 10 persons were injured.<sup>1</sup>
- On 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017, there was a violent dispute between APC Member of Parliament, Amadu Kanu and David Kargbo Jr., a prospective parliamentary candidate for constituency 086, Ribbi Chiefdom, Moyamba District in the Southern Region. Both are contesting for the candidature of their party in the March 7, 2018 elections for their constituency<sup>2</sup>.

### **Hostile Communication**

- On 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2017, a former flag bearer aspirant, Mr. Bassie Kamara of the APC suspended his membership of the Party accusing the APC of unfair treatment during the Party’s convention that took place in Makeni from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 15 October 2017.
- On 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017, National Officer and Chairman of the SLPP accused the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mr. Francis Munu of hate speech during an interview on Society for Radio Democracy (F.M 98.1). The leadership of the SLPP stated that the

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<sup>1</sup> NEWS Monitor Report

<sup>2</sup> Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation FM99.9

IGP characterized the supporters of the SLPP who accompanied the SLPP National Publicity Secretary to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) as “Idlers”. The leadership of the Party expressed disappointment in such utterance by the IGP calling for his immediate resignation or removal by the President, as the SLPP has lost confidence in the IGP to provide balanced security during the 2018 elections<sup>3</sup>.

### **Conformity to the rule of law**

- On 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017, the SLPP PRO Mr. Lahai Lawrence Lema was detained at the maximum prison following allegation of physical attack on staff of the SLBC. The PRO was brought before a Magistrate Court on seven count charges and was denied bail.
- On 10<sup>th</sup> November, the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) made a Press Release to express repugnance over the repeated violence and intolerance between and amongst supporters of the All Peoples Congress (APC) and the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP).
- The ECOWAS Court of Justice, which has the jurisdiction to hear complaints of the violation of Human Rights brought by ECOWAS citizens ruled on Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 that the removal of former Vice President, Mr. Sam Sumana, from office in 2015 by President Ernest Bai Koroma has violated his fundamental Human Rights to fair hearing and to participate in politics, as guaranteed by the African Charter on Human and Peoples rights (in particular Article 7 and 13), and other international Human Rights instruments. The Courts dismissed the argument postulated by the Government of Sierra Leone to the effect that the ECOWAS Court has no jurisdiction to hear the case. It was further argued by the Court that the reasons given by Sierra Leone for their objection are really not intelligible as the Protocol establishing the ECOWAS Court as amended (Article 9(4) and 10(d) is clear on the matter and Sierra Leone is a signatory to that and related Protocols. The Court ruled that Sierra Leone should pay Mr. Sam Sumana, who is now a Presidential Candidate for C4C political party all his salaries, emoluments and perquisites from the date of removal and to date.

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<sup>3</sup> Democracy Radio 98.1, “Good Morning Salone”, 13-11-2017

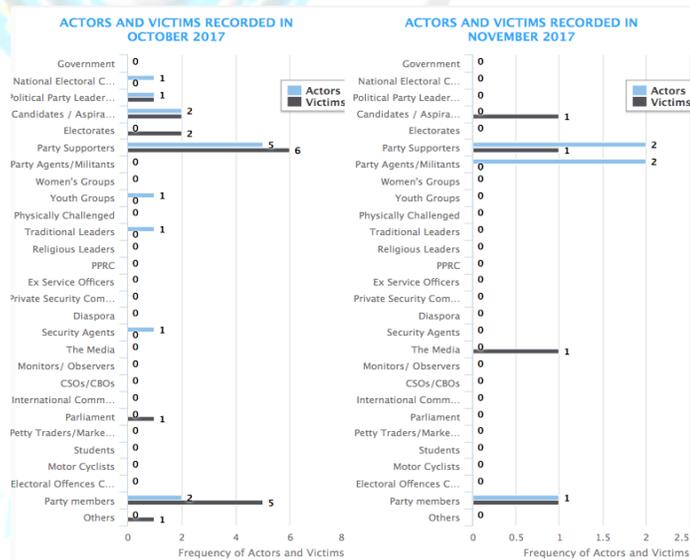
## Ethics and Procedure

- On 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2017, the Paramount Chief, Amara Goway Sama V of Tunkia Chiefdom, Kenema District, openly declared his membership of the All People's Congress (APC)

## Statistical Overview of electoral threats

According to WANEP's NEWS reports for November 2017, there were a total of nine incident reports submitted. These incidents took place in four districts, namely Western Urban, Kenema, Bombali and Moyamba, especially cases related to physical violence, hostile communication and ethics and procedure.

In line with the NEWS indicators categories, [physical violence and conformity to the rule of law recorded 33% incidents respectively. Hostile communication recorded 22% while ethics and procedure is 11%. In comparative terms the month of November recorded lower percentage frequency of physical violence reports as compared to October report but had higher impact



on number of injured persons from the inter party disputes than in October. A trend analysis of high-risk districts from the reports indicates Western Urban as the highest risk district from the cumulative frequency of three months reports of September, October and November.

Though there was a 5% decrease in the percentage of Hostile Communication in November as compared to October, the impact of the political risk is higher in November due to the personalities of influence involved and also the frequency of media reports and general public reaction to the incidents reported.

Key actors recorded for physical violence and hostile communication remains party supporters and members as reflected also in October. The media was identified as an active actor in November as compared to the data from October indicating the role of the media in the incidents of hostile communication and physical violence for the period.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **To the ONS/PROSEC/DISEC/CHISEC**

- The Office of National Security should work with the Provincial, District and Chiefdom Security Committees and with relevant CSOs to implement appropriate security responses to identified threats of election related violent at all levels;
- The Chiefdom Security Committees should work with appropriate Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to organize town hall meeting on political tolerance and non violence which improves civil-security relations in the lead up to the elections;

### **To NEC/PPRC/PPLC**

- National Electoral Commission (NEC) should also consider creating a regular forum for updates, such as a weekly situation report which will provide a platform for announcing key decisions and keeping the public informed about decisions yet to be made on a regular basis;
- NEC and the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) should strengthen the grievance procedures at the level of Political Party Liaison Committee. Capacity building is required to improve the Alternative Dispute Resolutions to better address the emerging intra and inter-party disputes at the national and district levels;
- Political Parties Liaison Committee should organize multi stakeholder dialogues at the district levels as a dispute resolution mechanism to mitigate political party disputes in the chiefdoms and districts;

### **To Inter Religious Council**

- Inter Religious Council should embark on dialogue and sensitization with the National Council of Paramount Chiefs to deepen their appreciation, commitment to non partisan

leadership and contribution to peaceful resolution of disputes within their communities in line with the Chieftaincy Act;

**To IMC**

- The Independent Media Commission should monitor and sanction respective media used as platform for disseminating hate speeches across the districts;

