



Media Reform Coordinating Group-Sierra Leone

25th June, 2023

MEDIA SITUATION ROOM REPORT FOR SUNDAY 25TH JUNE, 2023

(POST-ELECTIONS DAY)

INTRODUCTION

This report is a continuation of a rundown of the activities of media practitioners/journalists across the country. The media performance is gauged against the provisions of the Independent Media Commission's Elections (Coverage and Reportage) Regulations 2022.

The various media channels (Radio and Television) provided coverage of the counting process, at the various polling stations across the country; some in real time (Live); and others through recorded reports. Provisional results from polling stations are being announced by the Independent Radio Network (IRN). No winner has been announced, but then, there were scenes of jubilation by some members of the APC and the SLPP.

SOUTHERN REGION

Our monitor in the South informed that the situation was still normal and that acts of intimidation and incitements had not been recorded. The monitor said that the APC, SLPP, Civil Society Organisations and party agents were rigorously monitoring the processes along with the police. It was however reported that whilst most stations were linked with the IRN, there were few others that were still doing independent broadcasts.

NORTH-WEST REGION

The monitor said that things were peaceful and calm, but that falsified social media projections of the outcome of the Multi-Tier Elections, have the tendency to cause chaos, panic and incitements.

EASTERN REGION

Our monitor said that almost all radio stations were still linked to IRN, which is announcing, in no particular order, the provisional results from Polling Stations, across the country. A peaceful and calm atmosphere was however reported.

NORTHERN

MRCG's Monitor in Makeni reported that as a follow-up on the alleged irregular activities that were believed to have occurred on polling day (ballot stuffing), the police were currently handling the situation, but stated that a final verdict was yet to be made on those matters.



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WESTERN AREA URBAN

IRN's breakfast show dedicated most of its time to announcing the provisional results as well endeavoring to managing citizens expectations on the outcome.

AYV TV reported how the tallying was ongoing in all district headquarters and that the presence of stakeholders was felt.

The *SLBC TV* was also on air and there were reports about the tallying processes across the country.

A radio station, located in the east of Freetown, *Justice FM 89.3* Special Elections programme projected that there will be victory for the ruling SLPP; based on the provisional results they claimed to have in their possession.

SOCIAL MEDIA

MRCG monitors, observed a plethora of social media posts; with claims and counter claims; by the political parties; their supporters and political pundits. This misinformation and disinformation on social media, is fueled by the anxiety of the citizenry, regarding the outcome of the vote. SLPP and APC supporters unofficially released results; claiming victory in their respective strongholds.

The SLPP National Secretary General, Napoleon Koroma, in a Press Statement, published on social media; claims a Landslide victory for his party.

Some of the candidates also amplified those claims. SLPP Freetown Mayoral aspirant, Mohamed Gento Kamara, tweeted that he was in the lead; whilst APC supporters shared a purported result sheet from Falaba District claiming victory.

Anonymous users on WhatsApp also shared various unofficial elections results on social media.

CONCLUSION/GENERAL OBSERVATION

Social media has become a major channel for the dissemination of misleading information. Radio and Television stations, have so far refrained from amplifying such claims.