



## Media Reform Coordinating Group-Sierra Leone

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29<sup>th</sup> June, 2023

### MEDIA SITUATION ROOM REPORT FOR THURSDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2023 (POST-ELECTIONS DAY)

#### INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL ANALYSES

The MRCG monitors' report for Thursday June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023 observed that Samura Kamara of the APC is yet to accept the result of the June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 elections.

A congratulatory message was said to have come from former President Ernest Bai Koroma. This however turned out to be fake.

On Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2023, the European Union, Election Observation Mission called on Sierra Leone's Electoral Commission to 'promptly publish disaggregated results data at polling station level, to ensure transparency and public scrutiny.' The EU Mission added that it continues to observe the 'ongoing electoral process, including the ongoing tabulation of results for parliamentary and local council elections.'

A joint statement by the U.S, U.K, Ireland, Germany and the EU delegations noted that 'significant logistical problems hampered voting on election day in certain areas.' The statement also shared 'concerns on national and international observation missions about the lack of transparency in the tabulation process.' The statement, however, ended by stating that 'despite these difficulties, we remain committed to supporting democracy and the aspirations of the Sierra Leone people. We urge everyone to exercise restraint, respect the rule of law, and engage in peaceful dialogue to resolve disputes.'

In recent tweets, the leaders of Turkey, Liberia and Guinea Bissau have congratulated President Bio on his reelection, but some other leaders are yet to send in their 'expected congratulatory messages.'

The electronic media is relatively preaching messages of peace via radio and television. Two television programmes (*Wake Up Sierra Leone* and *Newspaper Review*) were broadcast on *AYV TV*. On the *Wake Up Sierra Leone*; the Chairman of the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion, Reverend Shodanke Johnson; appealed for peace and reconciliation. Another panelist, Moses Mambu, said that the National Elections Watch (NEW), Chairperson Marcella Samba-Sesay, usurped the powers of the ECSL, by the publication of NEW's Presidential Elections projections. While one of the panelists on *Newspaper Review* (William Sao Lamin) also on *AYV TV*; however; accused the Chairperson of NEW, Marcella Samba-Sesay of "trying to organise a Coup"; against President Bio. He claimed that the coup, was planned with Adebayor (the notorious Social Media Blogger) based in the Netherlands.



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Most of the newspapers, reported the Swearing-in of President Bio; following his re-election; the *Forum Newspaper*, however carried a banner headline ‘Stolen verdict... ECSL steals majority victory.’

### CONCLUSION/GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

For TV and radio, there are some issues of poor moderation, and programme production, as some of the presenters are ‘relatively new and inexperienced in media and journalism.’

The speculations continue on social media as to who will be the next mayor of Freetown; as well for the other Municipal and District Councils.

All of this was happening even before the official pronouncement of those particular results by the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone.

Hate speech is still evident on social media; especially against the Chairperson of NEW, Marcella Samba-Sesay; whose organisation; had projected a Run-off in the Presidential Elections. There are still issues of misleading/false information, divisive and inciting messages.