



Media Reform Coordinating Group-Sierra Leone

26th June, 2023

MEDIA SITUATION ROOM REPORT FOR MONDAY 26TH JUNE, 2023 (POST-ELECTIONS DAY)

INTRODUCTION

The report is another continuation of analyses from the MRCG Media Situation Room where monitors in the regions provide firsthand information about the media's performance in their respective Regions. Such reports are assessed in line with specific parameters; regarding media contents (Radio, Television, and Newspapers); after the close of the June 24th, 2023, polls.

SOUTHERN REGION

Our monitor in the South gave an account of how APC and SLPP supporters were beginning to claim electoral victory even before the official announcement, by the ECSL. Same was seen and monitored via social media, specifically Facebook, WhatsApp and TikTok. During a phone-in programme, on *All-out radio FM 92.9* Bo; listeners raised concerns about managing their expectations.

Our Southern monitor also reported that at the ECSL regional tally centre, APC representatives alleged that ECSL personnel were aggressive, but it was reported that the matter was later settled, amicably. The monitor also refuted claims about alleged APC agents that were believed to have been 'thrown and chased out' of polling centres in the South during the voting process.

NORTH-WEST REGION

The situation is said to be peaceful and that people were awaiting the final announcement although it is said that social media misinformation was still an issue.

EASTERN REGION

Our monitor said that on *radio Nongowa 101.3 FM*, the police personnel, media wing, Brima James Musa was questioned by journalist Bassie David Lahai regarding inadequate security during polling day. The officer however said that they did scan the environment and realized that there were areas that presented minor security threats.

NORTHERN REGION

Reports from the North indicate that the situation was normal and that people were still following IRN's announcement of the provisional Presidential elections' reports. The unofficial announcement of the elections results on social media continues unabated.



Media Reform Coordinating Group-Sierra Leone

WESTERN AREA URBAN

The *Justice Radio, 98.5 FM* in East Freetown, claims that IRN has been compromised and that people should stop listening to IRN. The station went further to declare that there will be no Presidential Run-off Elections; as Julius Maada Bio of the SLPP has won on the first ballot. *Justice Radio* also reported that the SLPP Mayoral Candidate for the Freetown Municipality; Mohamed Gento Kamara had won the race. The claims are in breach of the IMC's Electoral Coverage and Reportage Regulations 2022.

SLBC TV continued to give general updates on the atmosphere across the country; while IRN partner radio stations continue to announce provisional from various ESCL Polling centres, across the country.

AYV and *Star TV* were also giving updates while preaching messages of peace and national cohesion.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media circulation of misinformation was active on Monday. *AYV Newspaper* was a target on Monday; as its front page was manipulated and a fake superimposed online editing. The fake newspaper had a frontpage report; titled "Inter Religious Council congratulates Dr. Samura Kamara as president elect." *AYV* subsequently debunked the claim.

Social Media claims of victory by the two dominant political parties were fake and unverified.

CONCLUSION/GENERAL OBSERVATION

The deliberate attempts by political parties, especially the APC and the SLPP, including their supporters to make pronouncements on the outcome of the elections have not helped situations.

Attempting to pronounce the outcome of the election is not only misleading and inciting, but could also be a catalyst for political unrest and violence. However, the IRN partner radio stations continue to remain a trusted source of information for public consumption.

On Monday 26th June, 2023, Sierra Leone's Electoral Commission made a partial (60%) announcement of results, giving Julius Maada Bio of SLPP the lead with 1,067,666 of votes while Samura Kamara of APC pulled 793,751 of votes so far.