



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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WAEON AND WADEMOS NETWORK SUPPORT NATIONAL ELECTION WATCH (NEW)-SIERRA LEONE IN DEMANDING FOR THE RELEASE OF ALL POLLING STATION-LEVEL RESULTS TO ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY AND ALLOW FOR INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION AND ANALYSIS

The West African Election Observers Network (WAEON) and the West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network (WADEMOS) commend the people of Sierra Leone for holding peaceful elections on June 24, 2023.

WAEON and WADEMOS support the call made by NEW for the ECSL to release all polling station-level results in the spirit of transparency and allow for independent analysis and verification of the results.

WAEON and WADEMOS note that the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone (ECSL) declared the results for the presidential elections on June 27, 2023, based on 98.8% of all polling stations across the country. The ECSL declared the incumbent, Julius Maada Bio, president-elect, polling 56.16% of the valid votes cast with a voter turnout of 83% of all registered voters. The President has since then been sworn into office.

Prior to the declaration by the ECSL, the National Election Watch (NEW), **which is a member of WAEON and WADEMOS**, issued a statement on June 27, 2023, based on estimates from its Process Results and Verification for Transparency (PRVT). The statement, which matched the partial results earlier released by the ECSL, estimated a voter turnout of 77.3% with a margin of error of +/- 1.7%. NEW, in its statement, further indicated that "No candidate will reach the constitutional threshold of 55% of votes cast in the first round," according to the PRVT results.

At a press briefing on June 27, 2023, the ECSL declared the results for the presidential elections based on 98.8% of all polling stations across the country. The ECSL declared the incumbent, Julius Maada Bio, president-elect, polling 56.16% of the valid votes cast with a voter turnout of 83% of all registered voters. NEW has, however, buttressed its position regardless of the contrasting developments by releasing a second statement which revealed areas of inconsistency between the PRVT and the officially declared results by the ECSL.

WADEMOS and WAEON have been following these developments and note the variations in the election results declared by NEW from the PRVT and the official declarations by the ECSL for the presidential election. While WAEON and WADEMOS recognize the mandate and authority of the ECSL to declare the official results for the presidential elections, efforts should have been made by the ECSL to compare and reconcile data on the estimates from NEW to establish any discrepancy in the data before the official declaration.



The PRVT is an advanced and scientific election observation technique that makes use of sound statistical principles and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to observe elections. The PRVT involves deploying well-trained observers who are accredited to observe at a nationally representative random sample of polling stations. The PRVT is a globally recognized and time-tested election observation methodology that was first conducted in the Philippines in 1986 and has subsequently been applied in election observations in several countries such as Bulgaria, Chile, Croatia, Guyana, Albania, Bangladesh, Belarus, Indonesia, Georgia, Macedonia, Slovakia, Montenegro, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, and Ukraine. On the African continent, the PRVT methodology has been deployed successfully in Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, and Tunisia.

NEW is a member of the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM) and thus conducts election observation in accordance with the [Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations](#), which essentially acknowledges the rights of citizens to observe their own elections and sets standards for citizen observation. It should be recognized that NEW has built a reputation over the years for supporting democratic processes, and has acquired a wealth of experience from observing all public elections in Sierra Leone since 2002. NEW deployed the PRVT methodology for observing the presidential elections in 2018, 2012, and 2007.

The attention of WAEON and WADEMOS has been drawn to the unfortunate instances of NEW's representatives and staff coming under incessant online abuse and attacks since the release of the PRVT projections. WAEON and WADEMOS call on the government and the security services to, as a matter of urgency, protect representatives and staff of NEW from all manner of harm, including potential physical abuse and attack.

We would like to remind Sierra Leoneans that the United Nations Special Rapporteurs on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Associations and on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders' recently recognized election observers as human rights defenders and require UN member countries to take steps to safeguard the safety of election observers and not inhibit their work. We therefore call on the government and security services to prioritize the security of NEW and the safety of its staff.

WAEON and WADEMOS call on Sierra Leoneans to exercise restraint, ensure decent communication in online communities and avoid language that incites violence.

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WAEON West Africa Election
Observers Network

WADEMOS
West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network

About WAEON

WAEON is an independent, non-partisan and non-religious Network of citizen election observation organizations in West Africa and is headquartered in Accra, Ghana. Currently, WAEON consists of Citizens' Election Observation Groups in 13 West African countries which includes Burkina Faso, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

About WADEMOS

WADEMOS is a non-partisan, independent, civil society-led transnational democracy solidarity network. The WADEMOS Network consists of over 35 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) located in 15 countries in West Africa. The WADEMOS Network mobilizes, coordinates, and leverages the collective power of civil society and other pro-democracy actors, resources, and opportunities within the West African Region to advance, defend, and reinvigorate democracy and promote democratic norms and reforms in the sub-region.

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