



WEST AFRICA ELECTION OBSERVERS NETWORK (WAEON) NEWSLETTER

Volume 3, Issue 1

Introduction

WAEON's Newsletter provides news and information on activities undertaken by the Secretariat; network members in their respective countries; and updates on elections and governance issues within West Africa. This first edition for 2018 (January to March) features news and update on WAEON Secretariat and member organizations' activities as well as election and governance-related issues within member countries.

End of WAEON/NDI 2017 Liberia Elections Project

The sub-grant agreement between WAEON and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) which had been in effect since April/May 2017 elapsed at the end of February 2018. Through the sub-grant agreement, WAEON provided technical assistance to the NDI Liberia International Election Observation Mission (LIEOM) by

deploying a Long Term Election Analyst based in Monrovia, Liberia. In addition, the Secretariat recruited and deployed two Long Term Observers (LTOs) for the LIEOM, and four Short Term Observers (STOs) each for the first and second round elections in October and December 2017 respectively. All the LTOs and STOs were drawn from WAEON Member Organizations. These interventions contributed to lending credibility to Liberia's successful elections. The project finally closed at the end of February 2018.

WAEON Member Organizations' Activities

Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD), Liberia

The Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD) in Liberia held a post-election lessons-learned conference at the Musu Spot in

Monrovia to discuss issues emerging from Liberia's 2017 elections and to stimulate national conversations on electoral reforms. The one-day event brought together representatives of political parties, the National Election Commission (NEC), the security agencies, women and youth groups, Civil Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and ordinary citizens.

A topical issue from this conference was advocacy for financial autonomy for the NEC as a measure to stem political interference in its work.

See link for story:

<http://www.waeon.org/story-details.php?story=5ABD2F7AA5664&t=News>

National Civil Society Consultation of Togo (CNSC-Togo), Togo

On March 9 and 10, 2018, the National Civil Society Consultation of Togo (CNSC-Togo) undertook a regional workshop to train the youth on citizenship and participation in local development; and to equip them with tools for demanding accountability from duty bearers at the local level.

National Election Watch (NEW), Sierra Leone

The National Election Watch (NEW) actively participated in the Sierra Leonean elections in fulfillment of its civic duty. For the first round of elections on March 7, 2018, NEW deployed 11,122 observers of different categories in all 16 Electoral Districts across Sierra Leone covering all polling stations. For the second round of elections held on March 31, 2018, a total of 12,169 observers were deployed by the coalition across all polling stations in the country.

NEW mounted the Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) for independent and non-partisan verification of the official elections results in both elections.

See link for first round PVT results:

<http://nationalelectionwatchsl.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/85961d82-4e7c-4833-84b0-ad858d11ca14.jpg>

Other News: Election and Governance Related

Highlights of Sierra Leone's 2018 Elections

- The elections in Sierra Leone saw 16 Presidential Candidates with Julius Maada Bio of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and Samura Kamara of the All Peoples Congress (APC) as the two leading candidates

- The first round of the elections which was held on March 7, 2018 inconclusive as none of the candidates attained the requisite 55 percent of the votes to be crowned winner. This led to the run-off elections on March 31, 2018.
- Results of first round elections – presidential candidate of SLPP and APC received 43.3 percent and 42.7 percent of votes cast respectively.
- The National Grand Coalition (NGC) and the Coalition for Change (C4C) raised concerns about the elections and alleged irregularities which prompted NEC to recount presidential ballots in 154 polling sites.
- A lawyer associated with the APC sought an injunction against the run-off election at the Supreme Court on March 20, 2018. The Court’s ruling later lifted the ban and paved way for the run-off election.
- The run-off or second round elections subsequently took place on March 31, 2018.
- Final Results of the run-off elections:

Julius Maada Bio (SLPP) – 51.81%

Samura Kamara (APC) – 48.19%

Upcoming Elections in the West African Sub-Region

- Presidential Elections in Mali – July 2018
- National Assembly Elections in Mali – November 2018
- National Assembly Elections in Guinea – September 2018
- National Assembly and Local Elections in Togo – June or July 2018

Releases

The Secretariat on behalf of the Network issued two statements within this reporting period.

- a. Sierra Leone’s March 7, 2018 Elections: WAEON Calls for Peaceful and Credible Polls (Released on February 28, 2018):** WAEON encouraged Sierra Leoneans to be resolute in their quest for peaceful, free fair and credible elections; by being circumspect in their actions.

See:

http://www.waeon.org/assets/downloads/WAEON%20statement%20on%20upcoming%20Sierra%20Leone%202018%20elections_Final%20Final.pdf

b. Sierra Leone’s March 31, 2018 Run-off Election: WAEON Calls for Peaceful and Credible Polls (Released on March 30, 2018): WAEON urged the two leading candidates and their respective supporters to avoid the use of inflammatory languages in their campaigns; and cautioned against any acts that would undermine election peace in Sierra Leone.

See:

http://www.waeon.org/assets/downloadables/WAEON%20statement%20towards%20Sierra%20Leone's%20run-off%20elections_Final.pdf

Fund Raising

In this reporting period, the Secretariat did not respond to any call for proposals. However, the Secretariat was notified of an unsuccessful call on a statement of interest (SOI) that was submitted in August 2017 to the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS). The unsuccessful SOI was titled “Increasing the Capacity of Citizens’ Observer Groups to Mainstream the Marginalized in Domestic Election Observation Interventions”.

The outcome of a second SOI which was submitted to CEPPS in October 2017 and titled “Supporting Democracy Networks and Communities of Practice” is still pending. A third proposal titled “Mainstreaming of marginalized groups in election programming” was submitted to United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) in December 2017 and the status of the application is pending.

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Note to WAEON Members

WAEON Network members are encouraged to submit news entries to the Secretariat for inclusion in the WAEON Newsletter. Kindly send us with your views, comments and suggestions on what could be done to improve the network. The next edition will be released at the end of June 2018. Please send your entries to: info@waeon.org