



Republic of Liberia  
**National Elections Commission (NEC)**



**OCTOBER 4, 2005**

**TALKING POINTS  
CLLR. FRANCES JOHNSON-MORRIS  
CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION**

**☐ A WEEK TO ELECTION DAY**

The NEC is pleased to remind all Liberians, all international partners and stakeholders that Election Day is a week away.

Regarding the COTOL case, we wish to inform the voters of Liberia that on Election Day, they may mark the Senate ballot for two candidates.

In order to counter any suspicion on the number of votes cast for Senate being greater than the number of registered voters, we remind the public that each polling place has a maximum of 600 voters. In counting the Senate ballot, the number of votes cast in each polling place cannot exceed 1200, assuming a 100% turnout at that polling place.

For marking the Senate ballot, people need to remember that the color of this ballot is blue, so remember: 'blue, two'.

The NEC urges political parties, alliances and Independent candidates to continue soliciting votes in a peaceful manner in the last few days of campaigning. Liberians are advised to engage themselves fully in the process in the remaining week, carefully assess the candidates vying for political office and cast their ballots wisely. The 2005 elections are a great opportunity for Liberia to move forward, and the NEC wishes this period to be an exciting and rewarding one for the nation as a whole.

**☐ MOVEMENT OF MATERIALS NATIONWIDE**

The Movement of materials throughout Liberia is entering its final leg in preparation for polling day. As of October 4, all materials have left the NEC HQ warehouse. The packing and distribution of all Voting Precinct Kits to the county capitals is complete. Most materials are being moved by Road Convoys. Three locations were inaccessible and had to be supplied by ship, these consignments are already in Harper, Grand Kru East and Sinoe. 8 locations (Gbarpolu, Grand Gedeh, River Cess, River Gee, Upper Nimba, Lower Nimba, Grand Kru, Lofa) were served by air over the weekend. Slightly over 53.5 tons of materials and approximately 395 cubic meters left the warehouse during the distribution of voting precinct kits. The distribution to the voting precincts will commence by the end of this week, both by air to inaccessible areas and by road.



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## **IDPS IN SUPPORT OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS**

Leaders from seven IDP camps from Lower Montserrado visited the NEC on October 3, expressing their support of the electoral process. "We are here to say that we in no way will be a hinder for the elections. [...] We are willing to take on the elections, no matter what."

The leaders continued to show their dedication to the elections, emphasizing the importance of all Liberians being part of the process of rebuilding Liberia. The Commissioners expressed their gratitude for the visit and thanked the leaders for their support. Commissioner Boyenneh also thanked the UN and its agencies for the assistance provided to the IDPs as well as to the electoral process.

The leaders received on-the-spot training on voting steps and on how to mark the ballots and were given posters and civic education materials, such as rulers, stickers and plastic bags, to take them back to their camps.

The NEC Commissioners appealed to the IDP leaders to continue to encourage the IDPs in their camps to join them in their decision, stressing the important role the leaders have in promoting positive attitudes towards the electoral process.

## **REPLACEMENT OF VOTER CARDS**

The NEC has issued a total number of 4,692 replacement cards between September 17 and 30, 2005. These cards were issued from Magistrate's offices in counties all over Liberia. Those voters who lost or badly damaged their cards following registration have been given the opportunity to vote with replacement cards.

## **TRAINING OF POLLING STAFF**

All the 3070 Presiding Officers have received training on the polling and counting procedures. On October 6 and 7, the Presiding officers will in turn train the remaining polling staff consisting of Queue controllers, Identification officers, Ballot paper issuers, Ballot Box Controllers and Inkers. International Electoral Support Officers and NEC Electoral Supervisors will assist in the training.

## **SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Asked how the NEC could be confident that elections will be held on October 11 despite the Supreme Court ruling in favor of the rejected candidates, Cllr. Johnson-Morris said NEC was relying on the CPA and the Constitution of Liberia to proceed with the electoral process. The CPA states that elections shall be conducted not later than in October 2005 and the Constitution that it should be on the second Tuesday in October, thus October 11. She said the Commission has no authority to change the election date and will therefore continue preparation for polling



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unless otherwise instructed by mediators and other stakeholders in the Liberian peace process. She said her information is that the candidates are presently in Abuja conferring with ECOWAS Chief Mediator Abdulsalami Abubakar and NEC has received no word on their deliberations.

Concerning whether the rejected candidates have rectified deficiencies in their applications as the 7-day period given by the Supreme Court elapses today, October 4, the Chair said the candidates have already re-submitted their petition lists but the Board of Commissioners has not yet reviewed these documents. She disclosed that the Commissioners are due to review the submissions today.

Regarding the cost of printing all categories of ballots to be used for polling, the Chair said that information was not readily available. She however disclosed that UNMIL, which funded the printing of the ballots, has made a total contribution of US\$4 million for procurement of registration materials, ballot papers, and other materials to be used during the elections.

Asked to explain how the Senate ballots will be counted considering that voters will now be able to choose two candidates, the Chair said the NEC is developing clear guidelines on the tallying and counting process for the Senate race. She noted that these guidelines would provide detailed instructions to polling staff.

In response to a question on why the NEC was implementing only the Supreme Court ruling on marking the Senate ballots but not the ruling for inclusion of the rejected candidates on the ballots, the Chair explained that implementing this latter ruling on the rejected candidates could lead to a postponement of the elections, something that is outside the authority of the NEC. She said that only the parties to the peace process can alter the October 11 election date.

In response to a concern raised by a journalist that if NEC does not implement the Supreme Court ruling, the elections could be considered illegal, the Chair said she did not believe so, saying also that the national interest is superior to any individual interest. Cllr. Johnson-Morris however clarified that NEC was not ignoring the Supreme Court's decision but the Commission was not clothed with the authority to postpone the elections.

Asked why NEC could not have prevented the situation being created by the court rulings, the Chair stressed that NEC had simply enforced the nomination guidelines it had issued to all prospective candidates. She said this was done without bias towards any particular candidate or group of candidates. She said the Supreme Court decision was fraught with procedural errors, noting that without any record before the Supreme Court as an appellate court it proceeded to come out with a ruling. The Chair however pointed out that the NEC's inability to postpone the elections was not because of its qualms over these procedural errors but because the Commission lacked the mandate to do so.

On why the NEC did not wait for the Supreme Court ruling before printing the ballots, the Chair said there was no reason for the NEC to halt the electoral process when in fact the Supreme Court had not placed a stay order on the Commission.

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