



Republic of Liberia
National Elections Commission (NEC)



PRESS BRIEFING NOTES OF THE CHAIRMAN

MONDAY, JULY 12, 2010

BALLOT PAPER HERE FOR RIVER GEE DISTRICT # 3 BY-ELECTION

The National Elections Commission (NEC) is glad to inform the registered voters of River Gee District # 3 and by extension, the people of Liberia that ballot papers for the River Gee District # 3 House of Representatives By-election have arrived in the country. The 7,500 ballot papers arrived in the country from Accra, Ghana on Sunday, July 11, 2010. The ballot papers are now in a secured storage under the protection of UNMIL pending final distribution amongst the 16 Polling Places spread across the 7 Voting Precincts in River Gee Electoral District # 3. Movement of non-sensitive materials commenced on July 9, 2010.

NEC PROCEEDING WITH LOGISTICAL PREPARATIONS

Logistical preparations for the River Gee District # 3 By-election are well on schedule. NEC logistics personnel and the River Gee Elections Magistrate Office staff have already begun transporting training and polling materials from NEC's Central Warehouse to various polling places across the 7 voting precincts in the District # 3.

Packaging of sensitive polling materials including Ballot Papers will take place from July 13 to 16. The deployment of polling staff as well as sensitive materials (including Polling Kits and Ballot Papers) will be done from July 19 to July 20.

Already, 40 lanterns and an assortment of Barrier Tapes, in addition to other materials, are in River Gee for the by-election.

The National Elections Commission wishes to state that despite the small number of registered voters in River Gee District # 3, it considers the by-election crucial and as such has deployed a fleet of vehicles to the process. Those vehicles are currently in the county for the successful conduct of the by-election.

In addition to the fleet of NEC's vehicles, the UNMIL has consented to make two (2) trucks available from the UNMIL Sector in Fish Town to help in the deployment and retrieval process.

POLITICAL CAMPAIGN PEACEFUL SO FAR

The Commission expresses satisfaction about the peaceful manner in which the four (4) candidates in River Gee Electoral District # 3 By-election have conducted their campaign so far. The candidates have been freely presenting their platforms to the 7, 036 registered voters of River Gee County District # 3 and specifically to voters and urging them to turn out in full.

The responsible and peaceful manner in which the candidates and their supporters have conducted themselves during the campaign period is commendable and should be entertained in the spirit of building a sustainable democratic culture in Liberia. NEC admonishes the four candidates and their supporters to continue to exhibit the spirit of tolerance and conduct a non-violent campaign. NEC further reminds the candidates that the official campaign period for the River Gee District # 3 By-election which began on June 26 will close at midnight on July 18, 2010, 24 hours before polling day.

The Commission, in collaboration with the Liberia Media Initiative (LMI), will organize a debate for the four candidates in the style of a Town Hall Forum at the Fish Town City Hall on July 17, 2010.

Essentially, the debate will provide another opportunity for the electorate to listen to the candidates' platforms, ask questions and decide on whom to vote for. The debate is important for the process because it brings the candidates face to face with the voters in an interactive way.

TRAINING OF POLLING STAFF

NEC's training staff have been deployed across River Gee Electoral District # 3 to conduct training for about 76 polling staff; to include Presiding Officers, Voter Identification Officers, Inkers, Precinct Assistants and Ballot Paper Issuers. The polling staff will take up assignment at the 16 Polling Places spread over the 7 Voting Precincts (including 3 satellites) on Election Day. The satellite polling places were created to reduce the distance voters have to cover to vote.

CIVIC/VOTERS' EDUCATION

With just 8 days to go to the by-election, the Commission has intensified its civic/voters' education campaign to sensitize and encourage registered voters to turn out on July 20, 2010.

The Commission continues to distribute “Know Your Candidates” and “How to Mark Your Ballot” posters throughout River Gee Electoral District # 3. This exercise is being undertaken by 20 Civic Educators, Mobilizers and Town Criers hired by the NEC for the By-election process. Note that all of the Civic Educators, Mobilizers, Town Criers as well as the entire polling staff were recruited from District # 3. Voter education drama done in Grebo and Simple English are being aired on various community radio stations in River Gee. Additionally, there is also jingle produced in Grebo and Simple English explaining the electoral process and encouraging voters to exercise their democratic franchise.

ACCREDITATION OF OBSERVERS

Consistent with the declaration by the National Elections Commission for a Representative By-election in River Gee District # 3, the Commission wishes to announce that accreditation of Local and International Observers started on June 25 and ended on July 9, 2010. A total of 35 observers have been accredited so far.

SECURITY

Security arrangements for the By-election are being coordinated with the Local County Administration, UNMIL and the Liberia National Police (LNP). About 25 LNP officers will be deployed throughout Electoral District #3 for the by-election. UNMIL will provide support to the LNP during the process.

The Commission wishes to use this conference to thank UNMIL, USAID, UNDP, IFES and all our partners, including the media, for the important assistance to the process.

Thanks.