



**European Union
Election Observation Mission
Sierra Leone 2007**

European Union Election Observation Mission to Sierra Leone Preliminary Statement

A second round with a largely calm and orderly election day despite increased tension during the campaign period

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For immediate release

The 8 September 2007 second round presidential election has so far been generally well administered, offering an opportunity to build on the successful organisation of the 11 August elections. The National Electoral Commission (NEC) demonstrated a continued commitment to ensuring transparent elections. Voters once again turned out at polling stations to select their next President, demonstrating their commitment to democratic elections and representative government.

The NEC has continued to act in a transparent and impartial manner and it has managed to maintain the confidence of key stakeholders and voters throughout the election process. Voting on election day mostly went well in many parts of the country and there were improvements in both opening and polling procedures. Polling stations opened on time and the voting process was more efficient due to better queue management, more regular voting patterns and a greater awareness by voters of polling procedures. However, EU observers reported a number of problems and irregularities in Kailahun, Moyamba and Pujehun. The European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) encourages the NEC to rigorously investigate these incidents with the same degree of openness it has shown so far in order to conclude these elections.

The campaign environment for the second round elections varied considerably to the campaign period for the 11 August elections. The north was calmer during this period, whilst the western, southern and eastern districts experienced some clashes between supporters of political parties. Tensions were decreased by a number of public calls for calm by the presidential candidates as well as the President. These measures helped ensure that the environment during the final week of the campaign period was calmer. Furthermore, the level of policing on election day played a positive role in ensuring voters could cast their ballots in a secure environment.

On presenting the preliminary statement of the European Union Election Observation Mission, Marie Anne Isler Béguin, the Chief Observer of the EU EOM, said that "this period will be crucial to the successful conclusion of these elections, and the EU EOM sincerely hopes that all parties will remain committed to peace and democracy, patiently await the results as they are issued by the NEC in the forthcoming period and respect the rule of law."

The EU EOM will stay in country to observe the remaining aspects of the process. It is presently continuing to observe the tabulation of the results. It will issue its final assessment in a report to be issued within two months of the completion of the entire electoral process with recommendations for future elections.

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