



Press Release

for immediate release

Remarkably close and well administered run-off election

MONROVIA 16 November 2023 – In a press conference held today in Monrovia to present the second Preliminary Statement of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM), Deputy Chief Observer Jarek Domański highlighted: *“Election Day was calm and we noticed organisational improvements of the process since the first round.”* On 14 November, Liberians voted in the run-off to elect their president for the next six years. The National Elections Commission demonstrated its capacity to conduct the first fully Liberian-owned elections since the departure of UNMIL.

Mr Domański underlined that *“Our 85 election observers reported from 326 polling places in rural and urban areas in all 15 counties and 63 out of 73 districts. EU EOM observers assessed the conduct of the voting process in observed polling stations as very good. Procedural irregularities were reduced in the run-off also thanks to a refresher training programme for the polling personnel organised by the National Elections Commission.”*

The 20-days run-off campaign was largely peaceful and quiet as both candidates focused mostly on announcing endorsements from first round unsuccessful presidential and legislative candidates. As in the first round, it was a personality-driven campaign with a notable lack of issue-based activities or debates.

Freedom of the press and of opinion continued to be respected during the run-off campaign period but state-owned media continued to offer most of their news coverage to the incumbent. Closer to the run-off date, derogatory speech, inflammatory language and misleading content intensified in social media. While political freedoms of candidates and supporters were largely respected, the use of state resources by the ruling party continued to distort the level playing field.

“I appeal to both candidates and their supporters to show restraint and wait patiently for the announcement of the results. Should anyone wish to dispute them, they should do so peacefully, according to the established legal procedures”, said the Head of the Delegation of the European Parliament, Mr Leopoldo López Gil.

“A significant number of citizen and international observers continued their activities in between the rounds and on run-off election day, contributing to the transparency of the process. The EU EOM values the contribution from all stakeholders involved in the election process”, stated the Deputy Chief Observer.

The EU EOM will present a Final Report with recommendations to the Liberian authorities and public opinion at a later stage. The EU EOM was invited by the Liberian authorities to observe the 2023 General Elections and has been present in Liberia since 27 August. In total, the EU EOM deployed 85 observers from all 27 EU Member States, Canada and Norway, across the country to assess the whole electoral process against international obligations and commitments for democratic elections as well as the laws of Liberia. A delegation of the European Parliament, headed by Leopoldo López Gil, MEP, also joined the mission.

For media enquiries, please contact:

René SCHULTHOFF, Press Officer.

Mobile +231(0)772 086 291 - Email: rene.schulthoff@eueom-liberia2023.eu