

# Council of Churches in Sierra Leone NEWSLETTER



## Editorial

Dear Readers,

We warmly welcome this new publication and extend congratulations to the Communications Department for this initiative. CCSL has much to share regarding its programs aimed at enhancing our nation's socio-political and economic landscape. We are actively addressing crucial issues such as climate change, water justice, and violence against women, irregular migration, and human trafficking. Aligned with the Youth Congress's powerful slogan by the All African Conference of Churches-AACC in Accra, "Africa my home - Africa, my future."

We collaborate with partners like the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to provide psycho-social counseling, assist in resettling victims within communities, and offer limited capacity-building.

CCSL upholds values synonymous with the Kingdom of God - love, justice, truth, freedom, and peace. We firmly believe that national development is impossible without peace, which, in turn, relies on justice, truth, and freedom. Hence, we advocate for a peace that stems from justice - SHALOM!

I'd like to emphasize our engagement in Sierra Leone's recent multiter elections. We conducted numerous pre-election engagements, convening representatives from political parties to address pertinent election-related issues, especially the misunderstandings surrounding the Proportional Representation (PR)

system adopted for Parliamentary and Municipal Council elections.

During the elections, the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone deployed 630 observers, covering approximately 40% of the country's 11,832 polling stations across all sixteen electoral districts. This significant effort was made possible through the support of Bread for the World and Christian Aid, our primary mission partners.

The Council has a longstanding tradition of monitoring and observing elections, and the 2023 multiter elections mark the sixth such effort since the civil war.

While elections in Africa are often imperfect, the polling day atmosphere was relatively peaceful, ensuring a free and fair voting process. However, concerns arose during the vote aggregation and tabulation at regional centers, disrupting the post-election period and challenging the credibility of the Chief Electoral Commissioner's announced results, thereby threatening the nation's peace.

This highlights the imperative need to review our electoral system, and the Council will actively participate in this process, preparing early for the 2028 Elections.

Happy reading!

Web: <https://ccslaction.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/councilofchurchessl>



**Rt. Rev. Arnold C. Temple**  
**Bishop Emeritus**  
**Ecumenical Desk Officer & Member of**  
**the Elections Committee, CCSL**

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**Discovering the Council:  
Our Vision and Mission**

**WHO ARE WE?**

The Council of Churches in Sierra Leone, founded in 1924, stands as an ecumenical organization uniting over 24 Churches from diverse denominations along with 9 Affiliate Organizations. Driven by the principles of democratic leadership, transparent governance, and inclusive church and community participation, CCSL's structures enable broad cross-sectional engagement in the identification, design, and management of community-based programs.

Currently serving approximately one million members and close to 3 million beneficiaries annually—with plans to expand outreach by 2026—CCSL primarily supports vulnerable and marginalized individuals from low-income families and communities. It offers unique opportunities for institutional development and program collaboration, transcending national, religious, and ethnic boundaries. Through its comprehensive rural and urban presence, CCSL connects churches from all over Sierra Leone, reaching people in cities and villages alike. By doing this, we're always here for the whole country, listening to its heartbeat and its people.

Our aim is to foster a Sierra Leone where peace lasts forever, where everyone's rights are respected, and where everyone gets a chance to be part of the country's success. But we don't just dream—we work. We want our churches to be strong, leading the way with kindness, truth, fairness, and making sure everyone lives in peace and justice.

**Vision**

Empowered Churches in Sierra Leone guided by the Gospel for Life, Truth, Justice, and Peace.

**Mission Statement**

CCSL supports and enhances its membership's capacities to advocate for the prophetic ministry of Jesus Christ, addressing the spiritual, social, and developmental needs of communities.

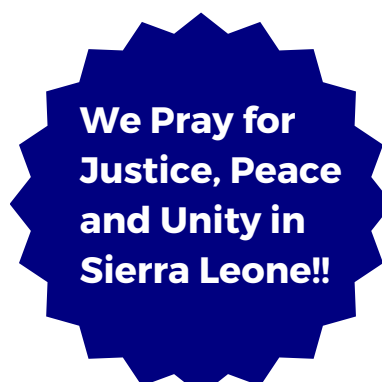
**Core Values**

The Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) upholds and embodies the following core values in all operations and engagements:

- Agape Love: Demonstrating sacrificial love by pursuing the best interests of each other.
- Integrity: Making sound decisions based on Christian principles.
- Tolerance: Embracing forbearance

of other communities, faiths, perspectives, and orientations for a harmonious understanding.

- Inclusiveness: Creating an environment where all individuals or groups are welcomed, respected, supported, and valued for full participation.
- Transparency: Maintaining accountability and transparency in all operations.
- Stewardship: Acknowledging responsibility for God's gifts and utilizing them diligently and thankfully for His Glory.
- Partnership: Valuing support and guidance from people of goodwill.





## Inter-Religious Council Calls for Peace amidst Political Turbulence

**"Inter Religious Council in Sierra Leone (IRCSL) collaborates with Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) to facilitate an open political dialogue with all political parties in Sierra Leone. The dialogue comes in the aftermath of the August 10 riots in Freetown and the northern region."**

At a gathering hosted at the Freetown CCSL Hall, Archbishop Edward Tamba Charles, the President of the Inter-Religious Council in Sierra Leone (IRCSL), emphasized the pivotal role of religious leaders in advocating peace within Sierra Leone's political landscape. Stressing the value of peace as a crucial asset embraced by both political parties and citizens, Archbishop Charles highlighted the duty of religious leaders to promote and preach peace, underscoring its significance for the nation's well-being.

Reflecting on the IRCSL's role as representatives of the people, Archbishop Charles recounted the Council's historical efforts in negotiating peace during Sierra Leone's civil strife from 1991 to 2002. These endeavors positioned the IRC as a moral guarantor, garnering respect even from the international community.

Addressing representatives from major political parties, the Catholic Bishop expressed concern over the recent low-key

representation of prominent parties, emphasizing the pivotal role of the IRC in national crises and decision-making.

Despite the Council's efforts to draft an agreement for a constructive way forward, the parties failed to adhere to it.

In a fervent plea for violence-free elections, the Bishop urged for a shift from prevalent negativity surrounding Sierra Leone's political processes.

Sheikh Ibrahim Barrie, an IRC executive, set the stage for candid discussions, urging tolerance and sincerity among all, emphasizing the need to prioritize brotherhood over political affiliations.

Bishop J. Archibald Cole, the General Overseer of the New Life Ministries delivered a poignant message titled "Beware Lest We Forget" from Deuteronomy 6:12, cautioning against forgetting past mistakes as a nation. He emphasized that violence has never resolved the country's issues and should never be deemed a solution.

During the session, political party representatives expressed concerns about ensuring stability and peace in Sierra Leone, highlighting perceived injustices faced by their respective parties. media misuse, and political intolerance. Political parties recommended frequent engagements between themselves and the security sector to foster understanding and avert conflicts. Additionally, they proposed a nationwide tour, led by the Peace Commission and political party leaders, aimed at advocating peace across the country. Hon. Abdul Kargbo, the interim Secretary General of the All People's Congress (APC), articulated instances of alleged injustices faced by their party members since the 2018 elections. He emphasized their commitment to non-violence despite accusations linking the APC to recent unrest.

Other party representatives echoed similar sentiments and suggested the necessity for a constitutional review, enhanced civic education, and the urgency for national peace dialogues among other crucial initiatives.



## Faith in Democracy: Empowering Faith Actors in Enhancing Civic Engagement for Democratic Elections

In a concerted effort to fortify the democratic process, the Inter Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) and the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL), in partnership with Christian Aid, initiated a crucial collaboration. This initiative successfully convened religious leaders from diverse backgrounds, fostering engagement in preparation for the upcoming elections.

Spanning two impactful days from April 3rd to 4th, 2023, the conference unfolded within the premises of the CCSL conference hall in Freetown. The overarching objective was to empower these influential leaders, amplifying their positive contributions toward fostering credible, free, fair, and non-violent elections in Sierra Leone.

Rev. Henry Samuels, President of CCSL, highlighted the pivotal role these leaders play in disseminating non-violent electoral messages to a wider audience. His emphasis underscored the need to effectively communicate and ensure understanding of the electoral systems slated for implementation during the June 24th, 2023 elections.

Haja Mariama Kamara, Second Vice President of the Inter-Religious Council, eloquently emphasized the immense influence wielded by religious leaders in shaping and nurturing a harmonious atmosphere in Sierra Leone during the electoral process. Urging active participation, she underscored their role as key custodians in preserving peace and stability within the nation.

The program, meticulously outlined by CCSL Project Manager Rev. Moses Khanu, focused on equipping these faith actors with indispensable skills for election observation and adept conflict management.

Rev. Sahr C. Fiah echoed the sentiment, emphasizing the potential of faith-based leaders in effecting tangible change if the strategies outlined within the program were efficiently implemented. Addressing pertinent challenges such as election violence, Fiah stressed the imperative need for vigilance and proactive engagement.

Critical deliberations spanned a spectrum of pivotal topics, encompassing comprehensive discussions on proportional

representation, conflict mediation, and resolution strategies, among other pertinent subjects.

The culminating outcome of this collaborative effort was encapsulated in a decisive communique released at the conclusion of the event. This formal statement underscored the unwavering commitment towards facilitating credible, free, fair, and non-violent elections, signifying a unified call for adherence to these fundamental principles.



**We Pray for  
Justice, Peace  
and Unity in  
Sierra Leone!!**



## The Council of Churches in Sierra Leone and the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone Engage Political Parties

**"The Council of Churches in Sierra Leone and the Inter-Religious Council collaborated with the security sector and political parties in October 2022 to strategize for peace and national unity ahead of the 2023 elections."**

In the wake of the violent protests on August 10, the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone in collaboration with the Inter-Religious Council held an open and direct dialogue with political parties. The subsequent October engagement aimed to strategize on fostering collaboration between the security sector and political parties as principal stakeholders, fostering peace and national unity in Sierra Leone.

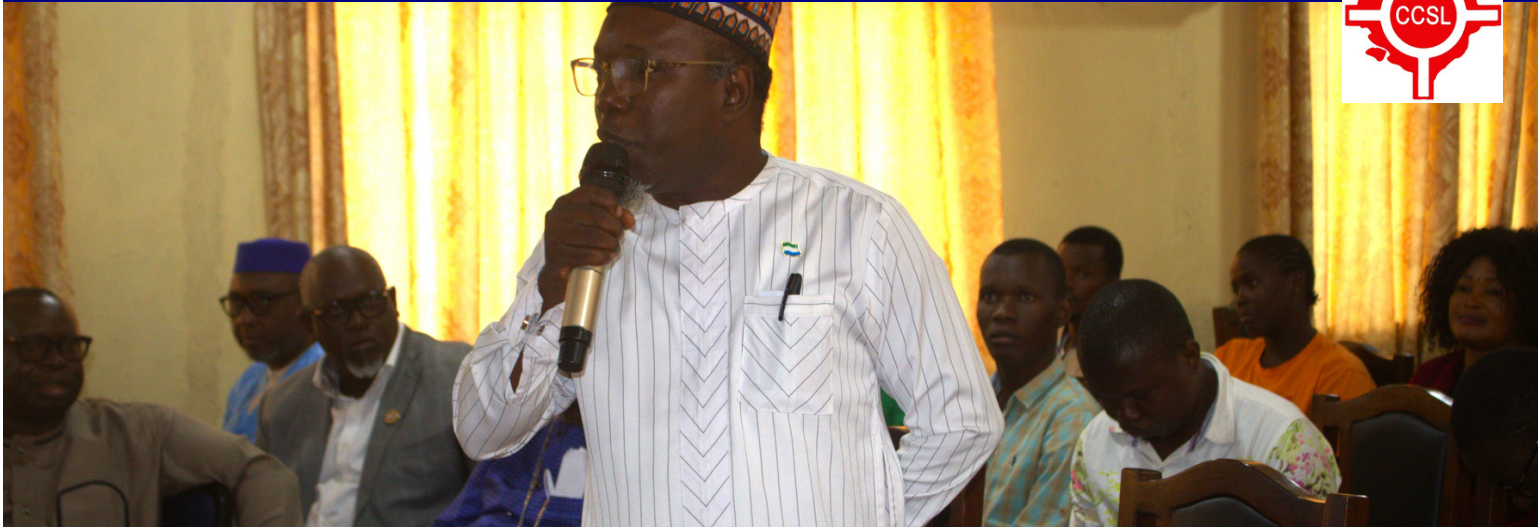
Rev. Osman Fornah, General Secretary of the Inter-Religious Council, highlighted the critical roles of election management bodies and faith-based organizations in ensuring peaceful, free, fair, and credible elections. He emphasized the need for their impartial and nonpartisan conduct in fulfilling these essential responsibilities. Both the Inter-Religious Council and the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone reiterated their commitment to mediate and facilitate continuous engagement with relevant sectors to uphold peace.

Francis L. Keilie, Chief of Staff at the Office of National Security (ONS), underlined the security sector's focus on people-centered security rather than safeguarding a particular regime. Keilie acknowledged the challenges in establishing trust, especially with opposition parties, but expressed hope in cultivating mutual confidence in the security sector ahead of the elections.

While expressing preparedness for a seamless 2023 election process, Keilie acknowledged Sierra Leone's historical association of elections with violence, necessitating a continuous security presence in electoral activities. He outlined the Integrated Election Security planning committee's comprehensive strategy and a national threat assessment designed to tackle identified threats like hate speech, social media misuse, and political intolerance.

Political parties recommended frequent engagements between themselves and the security sector to foster understanding and avert conflicts. Additionally, they proposed a nationwide tour, led by the Peace Commission and political party leaders, aimed at advocating peace across the country.





## Inclusive Engagement and Addressing Concerns: CCSL and IRCSL Respond to Political Parties Ahead of the 2023 Elections

Ahead of the highly anticipated June 24, 2023 elections, the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) and the Inter Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) played a pivotal role in fostering dialogue and addressing the concerns raised by various political parties. A significant gathering was convened on May 18, 2023, at the CCSL's headquarters, bringing together representatives from diverse political entities.

The platform provided an avenue for political parties to voice their apprehensions, highlighting critical challenges impeding a fair, just, and secure electoral process. A range of issues surfaced during this crucial dialogue, accentuating concerns such as the alarming instances of violence targeting female candidates, deliberate destruction of campaign materials, perceived institutional biases, and discrepancies within the electoral criteria.

The representatives fervently advocated for the assurance of an environment conducive to political engagement, emphasizing the necessity of ensuring that every citizen could participate in the electoral process without fear or discrimination.

Amidst these discussions, the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Augustine Keillie, stepped forward to reaffirm the unwavering commitment of the Police Force toward upholding peace and security throughout every phase—before, during, and after the electoral process. This commitment aimed to assuage concerns regarding the safety and security of citizens during this critical period.

Rev. Henry Samuels, in outlining the "PAP" approach (Pray, Advocate, and Participate), underscored the importance of a multi-faceted strategy for ensuring a successful election. This approach aimed not only at praying for a peaceful process but also advocating for fairness and active participation in the electoral proceedings.

Additionally, the General Secretary of the Inter Religious Council, Rev. Usman Fornah, reassured the political parties that their concerns were heard, recognized, and would be addressed with the utmost seriousness.

Commitments were made to initiate necessary actions within the involved sectors, ensuring that the voiced concerns were not merely

acknowledged but actively pursued for resolution.

This collaborative effort between CCSL, IRCSL, and the representatives of political parties signifies a pivotal step in ensuring a transparent, fair, and inclusive electoral process, fostering an environment where concerns are acknowledged and actions are taken to address them.



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**CCSL Trains Coordinators on the Proportional Representation System and Civic Responsibility for Replication at District Level**

The Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) organized a training session for its Regional and District Election Observer Coordinators. The purpose was to familiarize them with the Proportional Representation (PR) or District Block system, slated for use in the June elections for enhanced understanding and election preparedness.

The Training of Trainers (TOT), held at the CCSL Hall in Brookfield's, aimed to equip leaders with the necessary knowledge and skills to comprehend the PR system and effectively transmit this information to their congregations and communities. Rev. Moses Khanu, the Program Manager of CCSL, emphasized this objective.

During the training, CCSL Elections Consultant, Canon Rogers Wright, provided an in-depth explanation of the PR system's mechanics, its benefits, and how the Electoral Commission Sierra Leone (ECSL) calculates seat allocations. He contextualized its use in past elections (1996 and 2002) and its forthcoming implementation in June.

Canon Rogers-Wright underscored CCSL's commitment to maintaining integrity as election observers. He highlighted the institution's history of conducting elections impartially, earning respect and recognition for their commendable work.

Bishop Arnold Temple, CCSL's Ecumenical Desk Officer, urged coordinators to focus on comprehending the 2023 PR system, detaching from previous election models. He encouraged them to actively engage in additional programs and training sessions to deepen their understanding.

Participants, like Canon James Y. George from Pujehun, praised CCSL's initiative, expressing newfound clarity and confidence in explaining the PR system to their congregations. Similarly, Rev. Mariama Bockari from Makeni appreciated the training but also requested a concise summary of the PR system to aid coordinators in disseminating the message effectively.

Rev. Emmanuel Farma from Bo emphasized the role of observers to observe and report rather than engage in interviews. He acknowledged the training's impact in clarifying their responsibilities.

Furthermore, the training covered topics such as political and election-related violence, its causes, effects, and the crucial need to advocate and promote peace before, during, and after elections.

CCSL plans to continue its educational tour across regions and districts to further enlighten communities about the PR system and address issues related to political violence.





## Empowering Voices: CCSL Conducts Voter Education and Civic Sensitization for the June 2023 Elections

The Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) has conducted a comprehensive voter education and civic sensitization program across all regions – North, West, South, and East – focusing on the Proportional Representation electoral system and addressing issues of Political and Elections violence in ensuring peace and stability during and after the elections.

These engagements were marked by active participation and enthusiastic attendance from diverse representatives across the regions. The initiative aimed to empower and inform individuals for enhanced engagement in the electoral process through various town hall meetings held.

Rev. Henry Samuels, President of CCSL, emphasized the institution's commitment to educating people to ensure their full participation in the electoral process with informed awareness. He highlighted CCSL's historical involvement in Sierra Leone's electoral process, contributing significantly to fostering peace and ensuring elections that are free, fair, and devoid of fear.

Canon L.B. Rogers-Wright, known for his profound knowledge, shared insights on the PR system, underlining the importance for the Church to comprehend and effectively communicate the electoral system's nuances to a populace with limited understanding.

Idrissa Eric Conteh, a representative from the Wesleyan Church in Port Loko, appreciated the church's effort in simplifying the PR system, dispelling doubts and increasing clarity.

Bishop Solomon Scot- Manga of the Anglican Diocese of Bo stressed the church's integral role within the community, emphasizing the direct impact of national affairs on the church and advocating for an objective engagement with politics.

Rev. Gaskin M. Amara of the United Methodist Church in Makeni highlighted the general lack of understanding about the PR system, urging for more extensive civic education, echoing a sentiment supported by a Politico News article titled "Majority Unaware of PR System" (published March 24, 2023, page 6).

Pastor Michael Sorie Dumbuya of the National Pentecostal Church in Kenema called upon religious leaders to uphold objectivity and non-partisanship to prevent disputes and violence within their congregations, acknowledging the significant impact of their actions on others.

Rosaline Y. Bangura, representing the Wesleyan Church in Port Loko, expressed satisfaction in learning about women's secure space within the PR system for the selection of parliament members.

Addressing political violence, Rev. Samuels emphasized the pivotal role of religious leaders in counseling youth against excessive drug use, particularly highlighting the impact of substances like 'Kush' on voter turnout due to intoxication. Bishop Solomon Khazali of the Evangelical Mission highlighted the emerging issue of drug abuse, pledging action by religious leaders in Port Loko while commending CCSL's efforts and advocating for further civic education and sensitization.

Minister Marionette Thomas from the Pentecostal Fellowship Sierra Leone stressed the importance of preaching love as a foundational value, believing that love could deter negative actions among Sierra Leoneans if embraced wholeheartedly.





## Harmony in Action: CCSL Equips Faith Actors with Dispute Resolution Skills for the Consolidation of Peace and Stability

In a significant initiative fostering collaboration among Interfaith Leaders, a comprehensive training session on Alternative Dispute Resolution was conducted. The two-day workshop, held on August 1st and 2nd at the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) Conference Hall in Freetown, aimed at equipping faith leaders with essential skills to actively engage in advocating for peace, good governance, human rights, and gender justice.

During the workshop, Rev. James A. B. Fonah of the Methodist Church Sierra Leone highlighted how individual perceptions and responses significantly impact conflict resolution. He pointed out the prevailing issue of "winner takes it all" in Sierra Leone and proposed the concept of a 'shared democracy' for Africa, suggesting governance shared based on election result percentages. He emphasized the imperative for unity within the interfaith community to yield more significant influence in conflict resolution efforts.

Representing Side by Side, Haja Mariama Kamara stressed the critical role of truth in resolving conflicts, urging interfaith leaders to consistently stand for truth.

Alfred Moses Kamara, President of Radio Maria, underscored the importance of truth, mercy, and justice in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). He emphasized that the practice and visibility of these elements are fundamental for successful ADR processes.

The National Coordinator of the Inter Religious Council, Rev. Alimamy P. Kargbo, emphasized the collective

responsibility of every individual in conflict resolution, drawing an analogy between societal roles and the body's different parts. He highlighted prevalent issues of dishonesty and theft in Sierra Leone, urging interfaith leaders to take proactive measures to tackle these challenges.

Bishop Arnold Temple the Ecumenical Relations Department, CCSL, emphasized the interconnection between peace, justice, truth, and freedom, asserting that their absence undermines the possibility of peace. He acknowledged the consistent intervention of interfaith leaders in addressing societal unrest, emphasizing their role as ambassadors of reconciliation for the sake of harmony among diverse faiths.

Alvina Thompson of Radio Maria stressed the need for interfaith leaders to integrate messages promoting national unity into their teachings, especially within Sunday school sessions, acknowledging the influence of spiritual leaders in the lives of Sierra Leoneans.

Rev. Henry Samuels, President of Council Churches in Sierra Leone

encouraged interfaith leaders to remain steadfast in their commitment to advocating for what is right. He highlighted the expectation of the people for leaders to speak on their behalf, emphasizing the importance of personal integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Rev. Daneil Koroma from the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion warned about the potential escalation of latent conflicts into violent ones if not handled appropriately.

Canon Rogers-Wright and Desmond George-Williams, the lead facilitators, extensively covered topics including conflict phases, the role of the interfaith community in conflict resolution, democracy, peace, national cohesion, and the involvement of religious leaders in post-election scenarios.

In a collective resolution, interfaith leaders pledged to engage in inclusive dialogues on peace and national cohesion, extending their outreach to various stakeholders including state actors, tribal heads, market women, youth, CSOs, NGOs, and Election Management Bodies. They also committed to popularizing the recommendations outlined in the TRC Report.



## Council of Churches in Sierra Leone Summary Report on the National Multitier Elections Held on June 24, 2023

The Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) has released their report following the national multitier elections that took place on June 24, 2023. This detailed report is in fulfillment of the Council’s commitment to provide a comprehensive analysis after the Electoral Council for Sierra Leone (ECSL) releases all the election results.

Based on the analysis of 484 reports/checklists received from the Council's observers stationed across various field/polling stations nationwide, representing 80% of the 605 trained and deployed observers, the Council was able to cover 40% of the total 11,832 polling stations in the country. The successful deployment to all 16 electoral districts was made possible through support from international donor partners, primarily Bread for the World.

Despite achievements, the Council faced significant constraints in logistics suitable for challenging terrains and inadequate financial resources, limiting their coverage.

### Observations Prior to Polling/Voting:

A substantial number of observers noted a delay in voting materials' availability, causing a delay in poll station openings, with some commencing voting as late as 11:00 am. Presence of party agents from various political parties was only noted in approximately 85% of polling stations, primarily from major parties like APC and SLPP. However, their physical presence

was lacking at the start of polling.

### During Polling:

Delayed starts were observed in about 70% of polling stations due to electoral material delays. While order was generally maintained, some minor disruptions occurred. Observers reported an overwhelming presence of security personnel (99%) and ballot boxes kept in plain sight (98.8%). Despite efforts, secrecy in voting was compromised due to inadequate polling booth arrangements, impacting the level of privacy.

### Overall Assessment:

Observations from observers affirmed that the polling process was relatively free, fair, and peaceful. However, a small percentage of officials demonstrated unprofessional behavior. Counting of votes was observed in the presence of party agents and observers, maintaining transparency to some extent.

### Tallying/Tabulation of Votes:

The tallying process faced challenges, including discrepancies between blind entries of data

and an apparent lack of adherence to procedures in resolving discrepancies. Additionally, the transparency of the tallying process was marred by keeping stakeholders at a distance due to security concerns.

### Conclusion:

The report highlighted challenges such as access to polling stations, overcrowding, voter ID mismatches, and high invalid vote percentages (about 4.7%). Post-polling activities have posed challenges to the election's perceived credibility and integrity.

The Council calls for truth, justice, and immediate meetings between Election Management Bodies (EMBs) and Observers to resolve outstanding issues. Despite challenges, Sierra Leoneans exhibited an impressive 87% voter turnout, emphasizing the value placed on democracy. The CCSL acknowledges the electorate's effort in maintaining a relatively peaceful environment and hopes for a sustained peaceful atmosphere in the country.

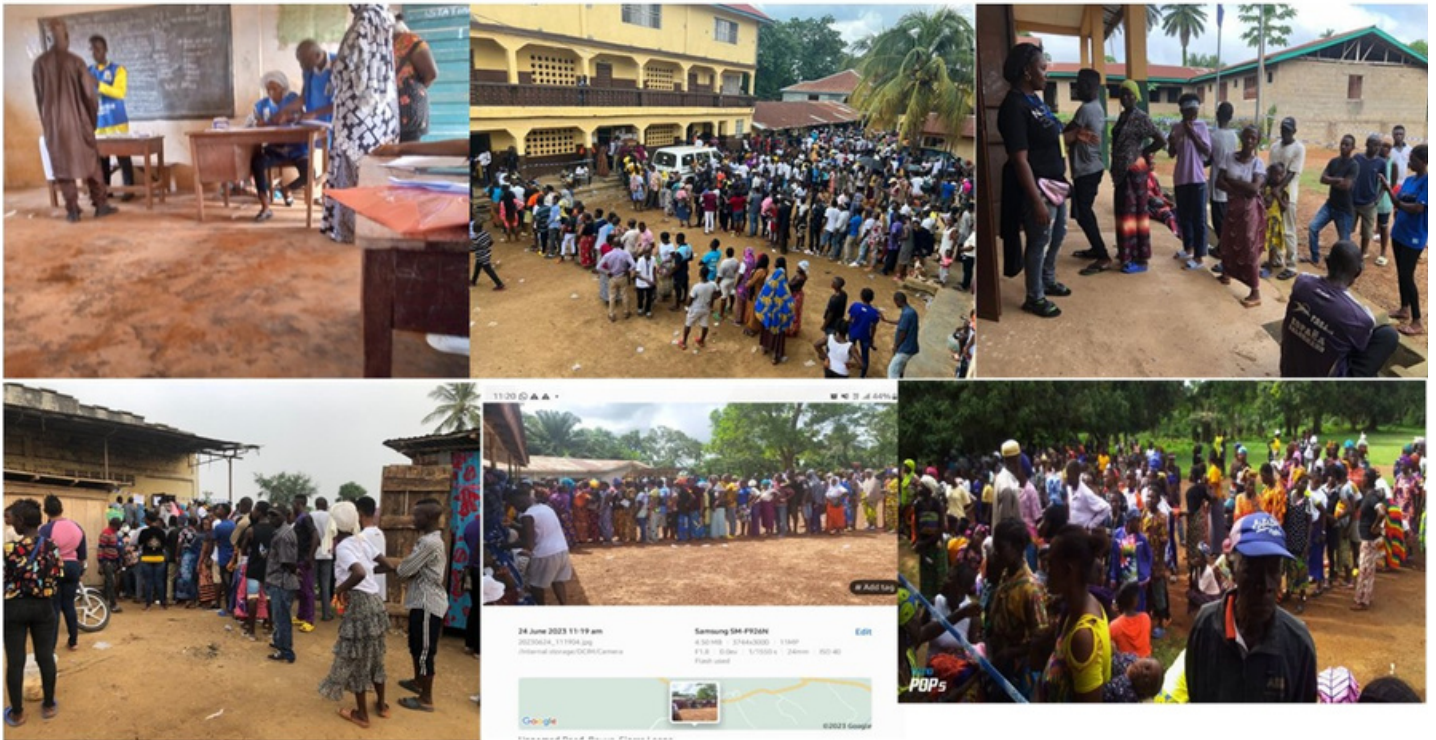
The Council remains committed to ensuring fair and peaceful elections and encourages a continuation of a just and peaceful environment in Sierra Leone, guided by the belief in the grace and mercy of the Almighty.



Photographic highlights of our work on the June 24, 2023 pools



Arrival and Observation of Election Material at various polling stations



Voting day at various polling stations across the country

**We Pray for  
Justice, Peace  
and Unity in  
Sierra Leone!!**



## Rebuilding Unity: Religious Leaders' Post Elections Pursuit of Harmony and Transparency

In the aftermath of the highly contested Three-tier elections held in June 2023, the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) in and the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) jointly embarked on a significant endeavor. Their decision was to engage key stakeholders, seeking to address and navigate the divisive aftermath of the elections.

Identifying critical parties to engage, the councils sought discussions with pivotal entities:

- The Elections Commission of Sierra Leone (ECSL)
- The Judiciary
- The Security Sector
- The All People's Congress (Main Opposition Party)
- The Sierra Leone People's Party (Governing party)

A significant meeting convened with the Elections Commission of Sierra Leone (ECSL), witnessing the participation of all commissioners. The discussions centered on the election process, particularly addressing concerns regarding the transparency of result tallying. The opposition, specifically the All People's Congress Party, expressed

dissatisfaction, leading them to boycott participation in governance. They declined to take their seats in both Parliament and Local Councils, including Mayoral Offices.

Mr. Mohamed Konneh, the Chief Electoral Commissioner, asserted the elections' credibility, labeling them as free and fair. He defended the announced results, stating that the signed Result Reconciliation Forms (RRFs) were provided to all party agents.

The Councils challenged the Commissioners to release the disaggregated data for verification against the Result Reconciliation Forms (RRFs) held by the respective parties. Despite this challenge, the commissioner responded by stating that they were not legally obliged to disclose such information.

Engaging with the Security Sector encompassed discussions with high-ranking officials including the Head of the Military, Inspector-General of Police, and the Head of the Office of National Security (ONS). Topics included the country's security situation, pre and post-election violence, and the security forces'

response, including unfortunate loss of lives. Despite challenges highlighted, the officials asserted professionalism in their handling of the incidents.

Meetings with the Judiciary highlighted concerns regarding the lack of credibility of the justice system. The main opposition party's refusal to approach the courts with their grievances raised doubts about the system's trustworthiness.

Engagements with political parties focused on listening to their perspectives while emphasizing the significance of their participation for national stability. The Councils reiterated that sustainable peace is intrinsically linked to justice.

The outcome of these engagements aimed at challenging issues on all fronts, speaking truth to power in a bid to address the negative aftermath of the elections. Despite not being part of ongoing talks led by external entities like the European Union, The Commonwealth, and ECOWAS, the influence derived from these engagements is expected to resonate and potentially impact the ongoing dialogues.



## COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN SIERRA LEONE

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11<sup>th</sup> August, 2022

### STATEMENT ON THE EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW DAYS

The Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) is alarmed and dismayed over the unwarranted violence that erupted in our beloved country especially on Wednesday 10th August 2022, during which our citizens and security forces were exposed to unwarranted death. We therefore, take this opportunity to record our deepest condolences to the bereaved families and relations and the country at large. Council accordingly calls for sanity to prevail and peace restored immediately.

The officers and members of Council appeal to each and every Sierra Leonean to demonstrate a high sense of patriotism and love for our Country! We have no other country to call our own. Council holds that as Sierra Leoneans we ought to have learnt the bitter lessons of violence from the 11-year senseless war that brought wanton destruction on this our beloved country. The scars of that war are visible all over.

CCSL is saddened that the violence experienced resulting in the loss of the precious lives and property of our compatriots has the tendency to derail our fragile democracy which we have been nurturing these past 20 years and has caused us further economic deterioration and depression.

Council is worried over the spread of hate speeches and the misuse of the social media; such activities only help to add fuel to the situation which can best be described as "the social milieu sitting on a time bomb". Thus, the Council insists that "force countering force, iron for iron" does not yield positive results. We therefore call for citizens' dialogue with their government to be intensified. As moral guarantors of peace in this country we avail ourselves and offer our good offices as we have always done to facilitate such dialogues.

This is not the time to insist on the "rightness" of motives/ intentions! Rather the words of prophet Micah resound loud and clear:

*He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Micah 6:8 (KJV)*

The Council of Churches in Sierra Leone is apprehensive over the time frame for the eruption of such violence. It is rather too close to the declared date for the 2023 elections and the possibility of it having a long-term negative effect on the whole process! What guarantee do peace loving Sierra Leoneans have that the election process will be non-violent and free from fear?

Let us dialogue and use the ballot box as citizens to declare our stance, please!

We continue to pray for sustainable peace for our beloved country!

May God bless us all!

**Rev. Henry A. Samuels**  
President

**Members:** African Methodist Episcopal, Baptist Convention Sierra Leone, Bo Anglican Diocese, Christ Apostolic Church, Christian Reformed Church, Church of the Lord Aladura, Church of God of Prophecy, Church of God World Missions Sierra Leone, Congregational Evangelical Mission, Countess of Huntingdon Connexion, El-Shaddai Charismatic Ministries, Emmanuel Baptist Conference, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Evangelical Mission, Freetown Anglican Diocese, Methodist Church Sierra Leone, Missionary Church of Africa, National Evangelical Mission, National Pentecostal Mission, United Brethren in Christ, United Methodist Church, Vine Memorial Baptist, Wesleyan Church of Sierra Leone and West African Methodist Church. **Affiliate:** Bible Society Sierra Leone, Christ United Pentecostal, Faith Worship Ministries, Scripture Union, Sierra Leone Theological College & Management and Church Training Centre, St. Peter's Healing Church, Pentecostal Church of West Africa, Young Men's Christian Association, Young Women's Christian Association.



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12<sup>th</sup> April 2023

### **STATEMENT ON THE ASSASSINATION OF ASP MATTHEW GBANYA**

As a Council that pride itself as the conscience of society we are concerned with the spate of assassination and violence in our country in recent times culminating in the brutal assassination of the **Senior Police Officer ASP Matthew Gbanya** .

This latest incident re-echoes the warnings religious leaders have been making against hate speeches, calls for extra judicial killings, violence in all its forms etc.

It has set peace loving patriotic citizens thinking what the future holds for our country even as we progress towards the 2023 multitier elections in June – just over 2 (two) months from now.

In this country where *an eye for an eye*, seems to prevail in most circumstances we of the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone call for:

A restraint to all forms of violence and any type of retaliatory act

Condemnation of all persons who promote extra judicial killings in any shape or form

A speedy objective and full (holistic) investigation of the circumstances surrounding the killing of the police officer ASP Gbanya and all others before him. We insist that the suspect (s) so apprehended be made to face the law without any delay!

Sierra Leone cannot afford to deteriorate in its strive for democratic justice and peace!

Our forth coming elections will lack the required credibility if they are not seen to **be free from fear, free and fair!**

Our plea at this critical time is for all Sierra Leoneans to uphold the tenets of democracy and to be patient and calm as we wait for the result of the police investigation.

We appeal to Sierra Leoneans to put this country above ourselves and our selfish motives.

Very importantly we do record our deepest condolences to the family and friends left to mourn this irreparable loss! May their faith uphold them in this their hour of grief!

Long live our beloved country Sierra Leone.

**Rev. Henry A. Samuels**  
**President**



# COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN SIERRA LEONE

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Website: [www.ccslaction.org](http://www.ccslaction.org)

## 2023 ELECTIONS: COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN SIERRA LEONE (CCSL) APPEAL TO CITIZENS

1. The Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL), an ecumenical body of twenty-four (24) member Churches and eight (8) para-Church affiliates was founded in 1924
2. CCSL have been participating in election observation in this country in the recent past dating from 1996.
3. Participating in election observation has led to citizens having confidence in the democratic process and to a large extent, lent credibility to the election result.
4. With support from our donor partner, Bread for the World (BftW) based in Germany, CCSL has again embarked on observation of this 2023 election starting from the registration process.
5. Council can categorically state that this 2023 multi-tier election has had a few challenges such as
  - The registration process and the late decision to employ the Proportional Representative System (PRS) for Parliamentary and Local Council Elections.
  - The lateness of employing the PRS gave rise to insufficient time to civic and voter education. Up to two months before the election date of June 24, 2023, most of the citizens are not fully au fait with the PRS.
6. However, Council needs to commend the effort of the ECSL to meet adequately the challenges
7. Council notes the huge presence of International Observers Organization and together with the National Observer Organizations in helping ECSL to ensure a free and fair elections.
8. Thus, Council takes the opportunity to appeal to all eligible citizens to take up their full civic responsibilities to quietly cast their votes on Saturday June 24, 2023.
9. Let us all as citizens of our country Sierra Leone participate 'Safely' in the election, June 24, 2023.
10. We call on all to continue to Pray, Advocate and Participate. God bless Sierra Leone and God bless us all.

.....  
**Rev. Henry Abioseh Samuels**  
President, CCSL



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### **PRESS STATEMENT ON THE RECENTLY MEDIATED DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE ALL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS.**

The Council of Churches in Sierra Leone prayerfully followed the dialogue between the APC and the Government of Sierra Leone held at Bintumani Hotel from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2023.

We congratulate both parties for their willingness to talk to each other with respect, openness and in dignity. We particularly acknowledge the roles of Dr. David Sengeh and Dr. Samura Kamara and their teams.

The CCSL believes that peace and national cohesion are vital for the progress and development of our nation.

In this vein, we thank the National Commission for Peace and Cohesion and our friends from the ECOWAS, the AU and the Common Wealth for their invaluable contribution in the mediation process.

We therefore urge both parties to be committed to the agreements signed in the Communique. We also call on all Sierra Leoneans to be calm and supportive of the process of achieving a better Sierra Leone.

The CCSL is committed to walk towards the journey of peace, unity, freedom and justice.

May God continue to bless our nation.

**Rev. Henry A. Samuels**  
**President**





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### **Statement on the Recent Security Breach in Sierra Leone on November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

The Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) expresses deep concern over the recent security breaches occurring at various Military installations, Police Stations, and the main correctional centers in Freetown during the early hours of Sunday, November 26th, 2023.

***We vehemently condemn this violent act and assault on State Security and the loss of lives. We urge the Government to swiftly and fairly conduct thorough investigations.***

We call upon fellow citizens to remain calm and extend full cooperation to law enforcement agencies during their inquiries.

We continue to pray fervently for the peace of our beloved nation and ***appeal for special prayers across all our churches, seeking divine intervention*** in these challenging times.

May God bless our beloved nation, Sierra Leone?

**Rev. Henry A. Samuels**  
**President**



We thank our valued partners  
and members

**Brot  
für die Welt**

Bread for the World –  
Protestant  
Development Service



## Visit us

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