

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC)  
2017 Presidential and Legislative Elections**



### **ECC ELECTION DAY MID-DAY STATEMENT – October 10, 2017**

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#### **Introduction**

This mid-day update is based on reports that the Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC) has received from 470 out of the 498 Rapid Response Observers deployed to polling places proportionally nationwide as of 1:00PM on October 10, 2017.

The ECC has deployed 2,170 trained and accredited observers including 170 mobile observers and 2,000 polling place observers deployed in all 73 districts. Of the 2,000 observers, 832 are systematically deployed as Rapid Response Observers, 498 of which are deployed based on a proportional distribution by district. This means that the proportion of polling stations observed by Rapid Response Observers in each district and county closely matches the overall percentage of polling stations in each district and county. For example, 9% of polling places where Rapid Response observers deployed are in Bong County and 9% of overall polling places are in Bong County. This proportional deployment enables the ECC to comment on the process nationally, drawing on data points from every district of the country. Appendix A provides a detailed breakdown of the distribution of observed polling stations by county.

This report focuses on the set-up and opening of polling places. Percentages reported reflect percentages of polling places observed and are not statistically representative of the country as a whole, but do provide credible data on emerging national trends. At this time the ECC has received 94% of reports from its 498 Rapid Response Observers. The majority of the missing reports come from areas experiencing poor network coverage in certain areas, including Gbarpolu 02, Maryland 02, Grand Gedeh 02. Therefore, these following findings do not reflect what has occurred in these areas. We will expect these reports to come in by the end of the day.

#### **Arrival at Polling Places**

- By 7:00am, 97% of all ECC Observers were at their assigned polling places. In 98% of polling places where ECC Observers are located, National Election Commission (NEC) staff respected the ECC Observer's status as an accredited observers and permitted the observer to observe at the polling place.

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## **Polling Place Set-Up**

- ECC observers reported that 80% of polling places had all five NEC staff present during set-up. In 67% of polling places, at least two NEC staff were women.
- Observers reported that all sensitive materials (including the ballots, ballot stamp, indelible ink, the Final Registration Roll (FRR), and the Record of the Count Forms) were available at 98% of polling places at the time of opening.
- In all of polling places where the ECC observed, the NEC presiding officer showed that the ballot boxes were empty and in 99% of polling places the presiding officer sealed each of the ballot boxes with four seals.
- ECC observers in 43% of polling places noted that they had to climb stairs to reach the polling place. Stairs make the polling place inaccessible to persons with disabilities or the elderly.
- In 95% of polling places where ECC observers are located, observer saw security personnel in the area.

## **Opening**

- ECC observers reported that voting generally commenced on time in most of the observed polling places. By 8:30am, 80% of polling places where ECC observers were assigned had opened. Another 19% had opened by 10:00am.

## **Critical Incidents**

Generally, ECC observer reports indicate that the opening process has been peaceful, orderly, and proceeding smoothly across the country. However, ECC observers have also reported isolated issues of concern at certain polling places.

The ECC National Information Center is also collecting critical incident reports from all 2170 observers. The ECC continues to collect and process these reports. Thus far, reports have included tensions at polling places where opening was delayed or where a large number of voters are queued, as well as instances where observers were not permitted to observe at the polling place.

While this statement only covers information we have collected during the set-up and opening process, the ECC notes that observers have also reported instances in some polling places where voters with valid voters cards have found their names to be missing from the voters lists. In some instances, these voters have been allowed to vote, while others have not. The ECC continues to monitor this and will have more comprehensive information in future updates.

## **Recommendations**

- The ECC urges the NEC to communicate to the public and its staff the procedures for polling places that opened late.

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- Voters should remain patient and peaceful in exercising their right to vote. Polling places will be open until 6:00pm and everyone in the queue before that time should be allowed to vote.
- The ECC encourage political party agents should continue to monitor the process through closing and counting.
- The ECC reminds the media to continue to be responsible in their reporting on challenges facing the process.

### **About the ECC and Observation of the 2017 Presidential and Legislative Elections**

The Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC) is a civil society platform, comprising 30 organizations that observes all aspects of the electoral process in Liberia, including the 2017 Presidential and Legislative elections. The ECC has an eight member steering committee with representatives from Actions for Genuine Democratic Alternatives (AGENDA); Center for Democratic Governance (CDG); Center for Media Studies and Peace Building (CEMESP); Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD); National Youth Movement for Transparent Elections – Partners for Democratic Development (NAYMOTE-PADD); West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP), Inter-Religious Council of Liberia (IRC) and the Women’s NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL). CDG serves as the chair of ECC.

The ECC’s observation effort takes advantage of advanced information and communication technologies (ICTs) to receive near real-time reports from its observers. The ECC has established a National Information Centre (NIC) in Monrovia to which ECC observers submit reports using coded text messages from their mobile phones. Reports are directly transmitted into a sophisticated database and processed.

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## Appendix A: Distribution of observed polling stations by county.

County	Distribution of Polling Places		Deployment of ECC Rapid Observers	
	Polling Places	% of Polling Places	Polling Places	% of Polling Places
Bomi	158	2.93%	14	2.81%
Bong	502	9.31%	46	9.24%
Gbarpolu	133	2.47%	13	2.61%
Grand Bassa	388	7.20%	35	7.03%
Grand Cape Mount	171	3.17%	16	3.21%
Grand Gedeh	167	3.10%	15	3.01%
Grand Kru	99	1.84%	9	1.81%
Lofa	417	7.74%	39	7.83%
Margibi	382	7.09%	35	7.03%
Maryland	156	2.89%	15	3.01%
Montserrado	1790	33.21%	166	33.33%
Nimba	699	12.97%	65	13.05%
River Gee	95	1.76%	9	1.81%
Rivercess	97	1.80%	9	1.81%
Sinoe	136	2.52%	12	2.41%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5390</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>100%</b>