



PRELIMINARY STATEMENT OF THE NDI INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATION MISSION FOR LIBERIA'S OCTOBER 10, 2017 ELECTIONS

Monrovia, Liberia October 12, 2017

This preliminary statement is offered by the National Democratic Institute's (NDI) election observer delegation for Liberia's 2017 presidential and legislative elections. The purpose of the mission is to support Liberia's efforts to conduct peaceful, credible polls; impartially and accurately assess the electoral process to date; and offer recommendations to improve future elections. In partnership with the West Africa Election Observers Network (WAEON), this mission is part of NDI's comprehensive international election observation effort, which has been observing the country's electoral process since February 2017. This statement builds on two pre-election assessment missions in [February](#) and [September](#) 2017, as well as the findings and contributions of the mission's four in-country analysts and six long-term observers who have been deployed across the country since June.

NDI's 35-person election day delegation included observers from 18 countries and was led by Senator Gary Peters of Michigan (United States); Senator Ken Nnamani, Former President of the Senate (Nigeria); and Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh, Regional Director, NDI. The delegation visited Liberia from October 4-12, 2017, during which it held meetings with political party leaders; presidential and legislative candidates; the Chairman of the National Elections Commission (NEC), Commissioners, and other election officials; security officials; civil society representatives; the media; international election observers; and the diplomatic community. The delegation also met with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. The delegation is grateful to all those with whom it met and who shared their views generously. The delegation also expresses its appreciation to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for funding this delegation and supporting NDI's democracy assistance programs in Liberia. NDI conducted its activities in accordance with the laws of Liberia and the *Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation*¹ and collaborated with other international observer missions that endorse the Declaration.

This statement is preliminary in nature. The delegation recognizes that the official tabulation process and announcement of results are not complete at this time. The delegation does not seek to render final conclusions on the October 10 elections at this time. The people of Liberia will ultimately determine the credibility and legitimacy of their elections. NDI will continue to monitor the electoral process through the completion of the process and will issue additional reports as appropriate.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS

On October 10, Liberians went to the polls in large numbers to elect a president, vice president, and 73 members of the House of Representatives in hopes of further consolidating peace, strengthening their democracy, and improving their living conditions. These elections mark an historic milestone for Liberia, as they present an opportunity for the first peaceful transfer of power from one president to another since 1944, and the first time ever that one democratically elected president succeeds another. Given the country's experience of past conflict, developmental challenges, such as poor infrastructure and low literacy, and difficult macroeconomic trends, Liberians should take great pride in the electoral process the country

¹ The Declaration is available at www.ndi.org/DoP.

has conducted to date. Concerted, good-faith efforts will be needed to bring the elections to a successful conclusion.

Election day was peaceful and generally well-conducted. The delegation was impressed by the enthusiastic participation of voters across the country, many of whom were young people and women. Voters waited patiently in long lines to cast their ballots. Polling officials worked diligently all day, and in most locations observed by NDI, adhered to procedures. Liberian political parties recruited, trained, and deployed tens of thousands of pollwatchers. NDI observers saw multiple party agents in nearly all polling places observed. Civil society organizations also mobilized more than 5,000 citizen observers who were deployed in every electoral district in the country. The presence of party agents and citizen observers contributed significantly to peacefully safeguarding the vote. The campaign leading up to the October polls was open and mostly free of violence, as parties and candidates expressed a commitment to a peaceful process.

However, some aspects of the process presented challenges on election day: some precincts with multiple polling places were overcrowded, and some voters were confused as to the proper queue to join; some polling places with many registered voters had only a single voting booth; some voters with voter cards were not on the voter roll; and some polling officials did not apply procedures consistently. The issue of “missing voters” brought to the fore complaints that had been expressed during the pre-election period by political parties, civil society representatives, and the media, to which the NEC did not provide an adequate explanation. Cumulatively, these difficulties led to slow-moving lines in many polling places. In a number of instances, polling places were located in buildings that presented difficult access for the elderly and persons with disabilities.

NDI continues to monitor tabulation and results announcement processes, which remain ongoing. NDI encourages the NEC to release preliminary results in a timely, open manner. Political parties should avoid acts of intimidation and violence and call on their supporters to do the same. Should parties have complaints, the delegation encourages them to seek redress through legal channels. Further below, the delegation offers recommendations to enhance public confidence and electoral integrity in all phases of the election process.

ELECTION CONTEXT

Election Administration

Elections Preparation

The NEC has administered the October 10 polls according to key components of the electoral calendar. In cases when the NEC experienced delays, such as the extension of the candidate nomination period, these actions were accepted by parties and candidates. The NEC was able to overcome challenges in delivering materials during the rainy season, including poor road conditions.

In the weeks leading up to election day, several political parties were concerned that the NEC planned to allocate 550 ballots per contest to each polling place, regardless of the number of registered voters, and they suggested that the allocation should be proportional to the number of voters in each polling place.² Some analysts believe that the NEC’s aim was to simplify the

² The average number of registered voters per polling place is 405.

distribution of ballots. At the same time, the NEC put in place two checks on multiple voting -- indelible ink and punching holes in voter registration cards -- and included a procedure for reconciling the total number of ballots at the beginning of the count. The observer delegation did not note any significant problems concerning the accounting for used and unused ballots on election day.

The NEC recruited, trained, and deployed more than 29,000 polling officials for election day. During recruitment, the NEC bolstered women's representation by encouraging females to apply. On election day, women were well-represented among polling officials, although most presiding officers were men.

Voter Registration

From February through September, the NEC carried out voter registration, exhibited the provisional voter roll, cleaned up and audited the provisional list, and replaced lost and damaged voter cards. The Final Registration Roll (FRR) announced on September 20 stands at 2,183,629 registered voters, with 51 percent men and 49 percent women.³ This figure was arrived at after multiple integrity checks by the NEC, including a comprehensive manual verification of registration forms, the inclusion of voters from the lost and damaged voters' card replacement period, and the removal of 4,567 incidents of duplication. The delegation notes positively that the NEC provided the FRR to political parties, as well as to observer groups that requested it prior to the election.

Public Communication

While the NEC experienced challenges with public communication during voter registration and earlier phases of election preparations, as of August it improved communications by holding weekly press conferences and expanding its outreach to various stakeholders. However, some parties and civil society representatives complain that the Commission at times is not consistent and clear in explaining issues when they arise. Some of the NEC's press conferences and Inter-Party Consultative Committee (IPCC) meetings have not been as productive as they should be. They are often terse and overshadowed by a stance of defensiveness, which hampers a fruitful exchange of information among stakeholders.

Political Parties and Campaigns

The presidential race was open and highly competitive, with 20 registered candidates, including one woman. Six women ran for vice president. For the House of Representatives, 983 candidates, of which 156 were women, were vying for 73 seats. Twenty-four of the 26 registered parties fielded candidates in the elections. No single political party fielded candidates in all 73 constituencies. The campaign period was largely open and grew more active in the final weeks before election day. Major presidential candidate campaigns organized large rallies with a festive, youthful atmosphere. In House races, candidates put more emphasis on smaller local gatherings, community meetings, and door-to-door messaging. NDI's long-term observers noted several instances of party supporters seeking to influence voters with bags of cement, chairs, generators, cash, and improvements to houses of worship and community centers.

Some candidates' appeals for support were based on personality and ethnic identity. Most candidates presented themselves as agents of "change," without offering concrete policy

³ The NEC had previously released a final figure of registered voters on July 25, but revised that figure in September after conducting a manual audit to correct errors and miscoding.

proposals or defined ideologies. Nonetheless, widespread candidate debates in the leadup to the October 2017 polls provided an opportunity for candidates to speak to the needs and expectations of citizens. According to some civil society representatives, these debates fostered public dialogue and reduced the use of inflammatory rhetoric.

The campaign period was largely peaceful. Parties and candidates expressed their commitment to nonviolence, and all parties and major presidential candidates signed the June 2017 Farmington River Declaration, as well as the September 2016 Ganta Declaration.

While campaign rhetoric at times involved personal attacks and disinformation, many Liberians were relieved that there were no reported cases of hate speech or incitement to violence. Some candidates, however, declared openly that this was their “turn” and left Liberians thinking that they might not accept the results. There have been sporadic incidents of violent clashes between supporters of different parties, including confrontations in Sanniquellie, Cotton Tree, and Paynesville, among others; however, the vast majority of campaign events have been violence-free. Some parties expressed frustration that the Liberian National Police’s investigation of the September 21 Sanniquellie incident, which was the most violent of the incidents, has not yet been completed. The NEC has provided the opportunity for candidates to seek effective remedy for alleged violence committed against their supporters. However, due in part to political parties not attending NEC hearings related to these cases, remedy has not always been carried out in an expeditious manner.

Candidates did not report significant restrictions during their campaigns. While there were some complaints from opposition parties that access to certain public facilities was restricted, only one official complaint was registered with the NEC. Many candidates and party interlocutors reported to NDI’s mission that their campaign materials were defaced or destroyed. These kinds of attacks often involved gender-based violence, in which the eyes and mouths were scratched off of the photos or posters of female candidates. Misuse of state resources has been raised as a concern by some electoral contestants during the last weeks of the campaign, particularly regarding the campaign of the ruling party, Unity Party (UP). For example, long-term observers have reported some instances of the use of government vehicles for campaign purposes. Some analysts and civil society representatives have raised concern that while the national state-owned radio and TV station, Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS), does offer space for a variety of political views, it is widely perceived as pro-government.

Application of Legal Framework

Liberia’s electoral legal framework is in line with international standards, although some gaps are evident, and some provisions are scattered among different texts. This creates the potential for legal uncertainty. In addition, some decisions by the NEC and Supreme Court have been cited by parties as inconsistent and have, in their view, diminished confidence in the judicial process. Three main examples of this were:

- The NEC rejected three high-profile candidates for failing to meet the eligibility requirements of the 2014 National Code of Conduct.⁴ All three candidates appealed

⁴ In March, the Supreme Court (in a majority opinion) ruled that the Code of Conduct (CoC) is binding and in line with the Constitution. For the scope of the election, provision 5.2 of CoC states: “a) any Minister, Deputy Minister, Director-General, Managing Director and Superintendent appointed by the President pursuant to article 56 (a) of the Constitution and a Managing Director appointed by a Board of Directors, who desires to contest for public elective office shall resign said post at least two years prior to the date of such public election. b) any other official

the ruling to the Supreme Court, which reversed the NEC's decision in two cases. The court allowed them to run after paying a fine, finding that these two candidates had resigned from governing office as required, although not in the required period. In the other case, the appeal was rejected since the aspirant never resigned. After this Supreme Court opinion, several candidates resigned from their government posts, filed their candidacy just before the deadline, and paid the stipulated fine.

- Citing the need for inclusion, the NEC chose not to enforce the provision of Section 4.5.1 (a) of the Election Law requiring parties to field candidates in at least half (37) of the 73 constituencies. Eleven political parties presented candidates in less than 37 electoral districts. An appeal was filed requesting the enforcement of this requirement, but the Supreme Court dismissed the case, as the appeal was submitted after the deadline for complaints.
- The NEC extended the candidate nomination period beyond the deadline stipulated by Section 4.5 (3) of the election law. Despite this violation, political parties assented to the NEC's decision. This extension coincided with delays in reviewing contested candidacies and resulted in the campaign period opening while the challenge process was ongoing. This created uncertainty in the political landscape and delayed certain candidates from launching their campaigns.⁵

Women's Political Participation

Women face many barriers in being nominated as candidates and running for office. This is reflected in the fact that just 16 percent of all House candidates are women. The election law includes a provision that political parties "should endeavor" to include no less than 30 percent women on their candidate lists, a vague standard that is difficult to enforce. Only one of the 24 competing parties, the Liberia Restoration Party (LRP), surpassed the 30 percent benchmark; the LRP is also the only party to nominate a female presidential candidate.

NDI's observation mission has reported that funding remains a major challenge for women candidates. In addition, they face cultural barriers, strong resistance to women in politics by male party members and traditional leaders, and bias in media coverage. Violence against women in elections (VAW-E) is also a significant deterrent to women's political participation in Liberia. Long-term observers, as well as citizen observer groups, have reported smear campaigns and insults against women candidates on social media and in public places, as well as reports of physical intimidation and threats against female candidates.

Despite these barriers, 156 women ran for seats in the House of Representatives, an increase of 73 percent compared to 2011. The overall percentage of House candidates who are women increased from 11 percent in 2011 to 16 percent in 2017. In addition, women candidates' level of preparedness appears to be higher than in 2011.

Civic and Voter Education

Civic and voter education was primarily carried out by the NEC, starting on August 18. More than 100 civil society organizations complemented the NEC's efforts with substantial outreach. The NEC hired 438 civic educators and 219 gender mobilizers to educate citizens on the voting

appointed by the President who holds a tenured position and desires to contest for public elective office shall resign said post three (3) years prior to the date of such public elections."

⁵ The Supreme Court ruled on the rejection of Michael P. Slawon, aspirant for Liberty Party (LP) in Nimba County, electoral district 9, on August 22, more than 20 days after the beginning of the campaign.

process, encourage the participation of women and disabled persons, and promote a peaceful election. Delays in making outreach materials available, including sample ballots, hindered efforts during the initial period of voter education. NDI's September pre-election mission expressed concern about this delay and the potential impact it could have on the NEC's goal of reducing the invalid ballot rate to less than 3 percent. The NEC and civil society voter education efforts ramped up in the weeks preceding election day, with a mix of in-person meetings, street theater, mock elections, printed materials, trainings, and media-based outreach. It is laudable that these efforts have particularly targeted first-time voters and women in rural communities. Long-term observers noted, however, that NEC civic educators and gender mobilizers had difficulty in reaching the more inaccessible areas of the country and that voter education often focused more on turning out to vote than on the process of voting itself. This became further evident on election day, when the observation delegation reported voters in more rural areas taking a long time to fill out ballots, often needing to ask questions of polling officials.

Media Environment

Liberian media is diverse and active. Radio is by far the most common source of information. All media outlets are constrained by a lack of resources. As a result, they are vulnerable to manipulation by special interests and political pressure. Some journalists do their best to reflect a range of views, and voters who follow a broad range of media can have access to a variety of political viewpoints. However, several factors put voters at risk of obtaining partial or biased information. A significant amount of content is paid for by those with commercial or political aims, and paid content is often not labeled as such. In addition, many media outlets are owned by or affiliated with individuals associated with political parties, and many people reported to NDI's mission that it is difficult to distinguish between objective journalistic reports and paid-for content.

Social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, is used increasingly among Liberian citizens with cell phones, particularly young people in urban areas. This has increased opportunities for political and electoral engagement, as candidates -- particularly major presidential candidates -- have engaged supporters via social media. Nonpartisan social media campaigns, such as #LiberiaDecides and #LiberiaElections2017, have helped enhance electoral participation among youth. However, social media has also been used to disseminate rumors.

ELECTION DAY FINDINGS

Election day was generally peaceful and well-conducted. Voters were enthusiastic, dedicated, and patient, in many cases enduring long waits to cast their ballots. Polling officials generally followed procedures in most polling places observed by the delegation. Observed closing and counting processes were conducted in an orderly, peaceful, and transparent manner. The delegation noted the professionalism and dedication of poll workers and their significant contribution to the conduct of the current polls. Tens of thousands of citizens participated actively in the elections as party agents and election observers. Despite these positive achievements, the delegation also observed slow-moving lines, resulting from confusion about which queue to join, the number of voters who had registration cards but were not found on the voter roll, the time-consuming process of searching for those voters on the roll, and the inconsistent application of procedures to check those voters' eligibility. NDI will continue to monitor the tabulation process through its completion.

Election Day Administration

Polling places observed by the delegation opened on time and had essential materials. Media reports indicated that some polling places opened late due to late delivery of ballots. The citizen observer group Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC) reported that by 8:30 a.m., 80 percent of polling places observed had opened, and that by 10:00 a.m., 99 percent of observed polling places had opened.⁶ Polling officials carried out their duties for long hours, with five polling officials present at nearly all polling places observed by the delegation. Women were well-represented among polling officials. However, presiding officers in observed polling places were much more likely to be men.

In most polling places observed, polling officials generally adhered to the voting procedures, including checking the roll, punching registration cards, and inking. Election observers and party agents were provided with access to the process, which enhanced its transparency. In nearly all polling places observed, no complaints were filed during the voting process.

Processing of voters was slow and inconsistent in some locations. Observers noted that in some polling places a number of voters with valid registration cards were not found on the voter roll. These voters were allowed to cast ballots, and their names were written on an additional list. There was a lack of clarity about the procedures on how to manage voters with registration cards who were not found on the roll, which slowed the process in those locations and underscored earlier concerns that the training for pollworkers did not sufficiently address procedures for voter identification.

The delegation observed that many precincts with multiple polling places lacked clear signs to direct voters to the correct queues. This led to confusion about which line to join. Where there were precinct queue controllers, some were not effective in directing voters to the correct queue. In polling places observed by the delegation, voters in line by 6:00 p.m. were permitted to vote, in accordance with procedures. However, reports from credible citizen observers indicate that there were cases in which this was not respected.

The overall environment during counting was calm and orderly at locations observed by the delegation, with no major violations or complaints filed at these locations. Party agents and observers were present and had sufficient access to monitor the process. Results were posted publicly. The delegation commends party agents for keeping tallies of voters throughout the day, which served as an independent check on the number of ballots cast compared to voter turnout. There is no requirement to record the number of voters who cast ballots at each polling place on the Record of the Count Forms, nor a procedure for reconciling that number with the number of ballots cast during the counting process.

Some observers noted that the transfer of materials from voting precincts to Magistrate Offices was not done according to procedures or in a secure manner in some locations. In some places, materials were taken and stored at Magistrate Office warehouses overnight, and then intake processes were begun at the tallying centers at Magistrate Offices on the morning of October 11.⁷ In other cases, materials were transferred to the Magistrate Offices in the morning. The chain of custody for material between voting precincts and Magistrate Offices was often not monitored by observers and party agents.

⁶ <https://eccliberia.com/2017/10/10/ecc-election-day-mid-day-statement/>

⁷ In the case of Montserrado, materials were taken to and stored at Upper and Lower Montserrado Magistrate Offices, and then taken to the combined county tallying center at SKD Stadium for intake and tally processing.

Participation

Liberians, including many first-time voters, came out in large numbers, some arriving hours before the polls opened. Most voters understood the balloting process; however, others, especially in rural areas, appeared confused about the process.

The delegation noted active participation by women and youth as voters, polling officials, party agents, and observers. In nearly all polling places observed by the delegation, women were participating as party agents and observers. While many polling places observed were generally accessible to persons with disabilities, a number of them were not. The delegation noted positively that the NEC issued tactile ballot guides, which help facilitate visually-impaired voters to vote without assistance. In most polling places observed, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and elderly were given priority in the queue. However, many people who needed assistance were not permitted to select who could assist them.

Political party and candidate agents were present in nearly all polling places observed. The most well-represented parties were All Liberian Party (ALP), Alternative National Congress (ANC), Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC), Liberty Party (LP), and UP. For the most part, party agents acted professionally and played invaluable roles by safeguarding the vote, tracking the total number of voters, and collecting information and results.

Civil society organizations mobilized more than 5,000 nonpartisan citizen observers to monitor the polls. For election day, the Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC), a platform of 30 prominent civil society organizations and networks, deployed approximately 2,000 observers, including 498 Rapid Response Observers deployed in a proportional manner by district. The Liberia Election Observers Network (LEON) deployed approximately 1,000 observers. These citizen election observers provided timely, impartial findings; safeguarded the vote; helped promote confidence in processes; and provided evidence-based recommendations for further improvements.

Security

The Liberian National Police (LNP) and other uniformed services within the framework of the Electoral Security Task Force performed admirably in ensuring a peaceful and calm environment on election day. Security personnel were present in almost every polling place visited. They performed their duties in a professional manner and did not interfere in the polling process. In Grand Kru and Maryland counties, observers noted that the expected reinforcement of officers had not occurred.

Civil society organizations joined the NEC and the LNP in advance of election day to advocate for violence-free polls. Notably, women's organizations such as the Women's Situation Room, Women in Peacebuilding (WIPNET)/West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Women maintained dialogue with political parties regarding their commitment to peaceful elections and have worked in hotspot zones to engage with communities on fair treatment of women voters. On the eve of the election, women's groups organized simultaneous peace marches in all 15 counties. On election day, the Women's Situation Room deployed observers and collected information about incidents. They plan to pursue their monitoring efforts through the announcement of results and acceptance by their candidates.

Magistrate Level Intake and Tabulation

Following election day, observers witnessed the intake and tabulation processes in six of the 19 Magistrate Offices. In these locations, thus far, intake and tabulation has been calm and transparent, with observers and party agents monitoring the process. While the procedures were generally followed, observers noted that the process began more slowly than expected. Some of the tabulation procedures, such as how to handle quarantined Tamper Evident Envelopes, lack clarity. NDI observers will continue to monitor intake and tabulation in some Magistrate Offices, including transmission of results, until the process is completed. Parties, civil society organizations, and the media are also collecting polling place-level tally information and adding up results.

Electoral Dispute Resolution

Although no complaints have been filed to date, the delegation notes that the electoral framework provides guarantees of the right to effective remedy, should parties have grievances regarding the electoral process. As stipulated by law, NEC magistrates in the field adjudicate disputes for complaints about election offenses and election violations for which the penalty would not exceed \$500 USD, while the NEC Dispute Hearing Office adjudicates disputes on election results, intra-party disputes, and violations of campaign finance requirements or those election offenses for which the penalty would exceed \$500 USD. All magistrate and hearing office decisions can be appealed to the NEC Board of Commissioners and then to the Supreme Court. The NEC has hired an additional hearing officer and clerk for each Magistrate Office in order to expedite resolution of complaints that may arise.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the spirit of international cooperation and in light of a potential presidential second round election, the delegation offers the following recommendations on steps that can be taken in the short-term to further enhance confidence in the electoral process and foster peaceful, credible polls. In its final report, NDI will offer further, longer-term recommendations to enhance political and electoral processes in Liberia.

To the National Elections Commission (NEC):

- Verify provisional results as they come in and release them in a timely fashion to enhance citizen confidence in the transmission and tabulation process. Provide polling place-level results in an easily analyzable (machine readable) format on the NEC website.
- Provide clear, frequent updates to the public as a means of enhancing transparency in the transmission and tabulation of final results.
- Ensure the security of electronic transmission of results between Magistrate Offices and the NEC headquarters.
- Adjudicate complaints and disputes addressed to the NEC in an expeditious, transparent, and impartial manner.
- Refine and clarify procedures for polling officials to manage voters with registration cards that are not found on the roll, and ensure voter identification officers are provided clear, written instructions on those procedures.
- Provide a refresher course to voting precinct presiding officers and voting precinct queue controllers to better direct voters to the correct queues associated with their polling places; clearly mark polling places within precincts.

- Consider putting in place measures for polling officials to record the number of voters who voted at each polling place on the Record of the Count Forms, and to reconcile that number with the number of ballots cast at each polling place during the counting process.
- Bolster civic and voter education efforts, especially in rural areas, on how to mark the ballot and how to find polling places within voting precincts.
- Expedite the procurement, printing, and delivery of ballots to ensure they arrive in polling places in advance of election day.

To the Political Parties and Candidates:

- Call on supporters to continue to refrain from acts of intimidation and violence as the country awaits the announcement of official results; avoid spreading rumors and disinformation.
- Respect the NEC’s legal responsibility to announce official election results and declare winners.
- Address electoral grievances through the official complaint mechanism.
- Engage more strongly in deploying trained party agents throughout the process, including in the tabulation at the magisterial level.

To the Security Services:

- Reinforce the operationalization of community policing in order to enhance collaborative working relationships with other election stakeholders.
- Ensure that all counties, including difficult to reach areas, benefit from enhanced police deployment to guarantee peace around elections.
- Improve plans for safeguarding materials during the transfer between voting precincts and Magistrate Offices.
- Complete and publicize results of investigations of election-related violence in a timely fashion to enhance public confidence and combat impunity.

To Civil Society:

- Continue to provide evidence-based, nonpartisan findings on the tabulation, results announcement, and electoral dispute resolution processes, as well as specific recommendations for improving the process going forward and future elections.
- Boost civic and voter education efforts focused on how to vote, especially targeting rural voters.

To the Media:

- Ensure that only verified information is reported, and refrain from using inciteful language.
- Maintain professional standards that distinguish between content written by journalists, editorials, and content that is published for a fee.

ABOUT THE MISSION

NDI’s 35-member election day delegation visited Liberia from October 5-12, 2017, during which it held meetings with political party leaders, presidential and legislative candidates, election officials, security officials, civil society representatives, the media, international election observers, and the diplomatic community. The delegation also met with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. The delegation included political leaders, civic leaders, and election experts from 18 countries across Africa, Australia, Europe, and North America.

On October 7, observers deployed in 17 teams to all 15 counties across Liberia, where they met with local government, election, political, and civic leaders. On election day, the delegation observed opening, voting, and counting processes in more than 150 polling places at 130 voting precincts across the country. The observers reported regularly on developments around the country and returned to Monrovia to share their findings. The delegation observed tabulation processes in six Magistrate Offices on October 11 and will continue to observe tabulation at some Magistrate Offices until completion of the process.

NDI began its international election observation mission in February 2017. The delegation benefited from a team of four long-term election analysts and six long-term observers who, since July, have visited more than two-thirds (50) of Liberia's 73 electoral districts in all 15 counties and conducted hundreds of meetings with state authorities, election officials, candidates, and political party representatives, civil society organizations, media representatives, and international and diplomatic missions in Liberia. NDI's mission has also observed voter registration, campaign events, and trainings of pollworkers, as well as sessions of the NEC and Inter-Party Consultative Committee. NDI's analysts and long-term observers will continue monitoring the post-election period. Should a runoff be required, NDI will deploy a delegation to observe the period surrounding the polls.

NDI Delegates and Mission Staff

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Senator Gary Peters, U.S. Senate, United States

Senator Ken Nnamani, Former President of the Senate, Nigeria

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NDI is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to supporting and strengthening democratic institution worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. Over the last 25 years, NDI has conducted more than 150 election observation missions in 62 countries. NDI first worked in Liberia in 1997. The Institute has maintained a permanent in-country office in Liberia since 2003. Current NDI programs in Liberia, which include technical assistance for voter education, citizen election monitoring, women's participation, and pollwatching for all political parties, are funded by USAID.