



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **WAEON Statement on the impasse of the Liberia 2017 Re-Run of Elections**

The West Africa Election Observation Network (WAEON) has been following with keen interest, the developments in Liberia on the aftermath of the declaration of the results of the October 10, 2017 polls by the National Election Commission (NEC).

The final declared results by NEC indicated that the two leading presidential candidates, George Weah of the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) and Joseph Boakai of the Unity Party (UP) polled 38.4 percent and 28.8 percent of the total valid votes cast respectively which implies that no candidate was able to attain the 50 percent plus one vote which is required for a winner to be declared. By default, a run-off for the presidential election was expected to be held on November 7, 2017 as declared by NEC.

However, Charles Walker Brumskine, a presidential candidate for the Liberty Party (LP) filed a formal complaint with NEC seeking for the cancellation of the October 10, 2017 elections and re-run the whole elections. The complaint was based on what he described as constitutional violations, irregularities and massive fraud detected in the electoral processes on Election Day and the immediate post-election period.

After submitting this formal complaint, the petitioner later filed a petition at the Supreme Court, in which he prayed the court for a stay of execution on all preparations towards the run-off polls on November 7, 2017 until the conclusion of the substantive case pending before the NEC. The Supreme Court in their sitting on November 1, 2017 ordered NEC to halt preparations for the election, and requested the plaintiff and the defendant to file their cases for hearing on Friday November 3, 2017.

Apart from this landmark petition, there are several other complaints that have been filed by some political parties and House of Representative candidates to NEC. Notable among these is the petition by the Unity Party (UP) to join the petition that has already been filed by Liberty Party, and which has been upheld by NEC. The implication is the level of uncertainty that the hearing processes has for the parties involved, citizens, domestic citizens' observation networks and international election observation missions.

WAEON would want to commend the petitioners, particularly Charles Walker Brumskine for taking the lead by following due processes in the search of reliefs and not resorting to violence to address their grievances. The Network would want to urge all Liberians and stakeholders to be resolute in their confidence in NEC and the justice system to deliver a credible verdict on the procedural cases currently before it.

Specifically, WAEON is urging:

- The petitioners, supporters, citizens and all other stakeholders to remain calm, repose more trust in the election adjudication and justice system, and wait patiently for the outcome of the NEC hearings;
- NEC to expedite the hearing processes on all cases that have been laid before it within the 30 days that the law mandates it while ensuring impartiality;



- The petitioners, supporters, and all other stakeholders to uphold the decision of NEC, and if in disagreement, they should follow laid down procedures to seek redress;
- The Judiciary, and by extension the Supreme Court to treat as urgent and deal swiftly with any case that may be referred to it should any of the parties decide to seek redress at their end;
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), domestic and international election observation groups to continue monitoring the processes impartially; and
- The media to sensitize citizens about the ongoing cases being adjudicated by NEC and also undertake responsible reportage of the proceedings.

WAEON is an independent, non-partisan and non-religious organization of citizen observer groups from 11 West African Countries that aims at strengthening and supporting Citizens' Election Observation Groups (CEOGs) in the sub-region. It was formed in 2010, and has its secretariat at the Accra-based Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana). WAEON observed the October 10, 2017 Liberia elections as part of the Washington DC based National Democratic Institute (NDI) Election Day observation mission.

Signed,

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