Freetown, 3rd June 2021: NCRA Commences Confirmation and Registration Exercise in the Northern Region with Some Improvement but Serious Challenges in Bombali District

National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) started off the Confirmation and Registration exercise in the Northern Region on 1st June 2021. On the first day of the exercise, NEW observed some improvement in the conduct of the exercise in Koinadugu, Falaba and Tonkolili districts, but there were serious challenges in Bombali district ranging from relocation of centres, late opening of centres, late arrival of materials, malfunctioning of equipment, to low knowledge of the exercise among the people.

NEW recruited, trained and deployed 225 stationed observers, which is 50% of the NCRA established confirmation and registration centres to observe the 1st, 5th and 10th day of the exercise in the Northern Region. In addition to the stationed observers NEW also deployed supervisors 1 to every 10 observers and 2 roving teams of 2 senior personnel each to have a fair coverage of the entire process.

Findings

- There were no sign posts to show location of the centres in all centres observed across the region.
- In Tonkolili, Koinadugu and Falaba districts, most of the centres observed opened on time.
- In Bombali district, all centres observed did not open on time.
- At about 2:00pm in Bombali district, in some centres observed there were no NCRA staff neither equipment present. At Lorry Park Makeni, Rogbaneh Road in Ward 121; at WCSL Primary School Bombali Bana in Ward 113, registrants waited at the centre up to 2:30pm and left after NCRA personnel did not show up.
- In Tonkolili, Koinadugu and Falaba districts few centres did not open on the first day. In Ward 187 Bendugu Sambaya Chiefdom in Tonkolili District, centres did not open due the unavailability of materials; in Ward 131 Kamadugu Sukrola in Falaba district at the time of our arrival at 3:00pm the NCRA staff deployed in that centre had left to collect materials from the NCRA district office; In Ward 138 Semendu in Falaba district, the centre did not open due to malfunctioning of equipment; in Ward 159 MCA Primary School Kaya in Koinadugu district, the centre did not open due to unavailability of materials;
- In Bombali district, some centres were relocated with no communication to the registrants and the NCRA staff. The centre at the Ernest Bai Koroma University, was relocated to the practicing School across the road; the centre at the RC School Binkolo was relocated to the Parish Hall.
- In all centres observed in Koinadugu, Falaba and Tonkolili, centres that were up and running had the required number of NCRA personnel and were all seen performing their roles accordingly.
• Staff recruited were mainly youth with a high number of females taking leadership roles in all centres observed across the Region.

• Some centres observed in Bombali districts had problems with equipment malfunctioning. At community centre mapaki, the registrants details failed to pop-up; at the Wesleyan Church Primary School Masuba and the Makeni Town Council the computers did function because the passwords were not available; at the Benevolent Islamic Primary School Ropolon and Ropolon Court Baray the scanners and finger print pads respectively were malfunctioning; at Teko Barracks Recreational centre, there was no computer nor generator but the generator cable was supplied; In Falaba district, in Ward 125 DEC Dogoloya, the VIU 820 was not responding; in Ward 127 Nonmokoya, the password was not available to login to the computer; in Ward 129 Open Space Lalay, the computer was not responding.

• The turn-out in most centres observed was encouraging in Koinadugu whilst in Falaba, Bombali and Tonkolili districts, the turnout was low.

• There was a high presence of technical and senior NCRA staff in centres to give support to the process in Koinadugu, Falaba and Tonkolili. Whilst there was none in Bombali district.

• There was no security presence in all centres observed across the Region.

• There were no other observers apart from NEW in all centres observed across the Region.

NEW calls on all residents in Sierra Leone to exercise their rights to confirm their details or register.

National Election Watch (NEW) is a coalition of local and international organizations in Sierra Leone with a common objective of supporting free, fair and peaceful elections.

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