



STATEMENT BY THE WOMEN'S SITUATION ROOM-LIBERIA, ON THE ISSUANCE OF THE WRIT OF PROHIBITION

Monrovia, Liberia
November 21, 2017

The Women's Situation Room (WSR), in our Preliminary Statement issued October 16, 2017, confirmed lapses and deficiencies in the electoral process of the October 10, 2017 elections as noted by our 322 women Observers and our 1010 line in our two Call Centers. To this end, we made certain recommendations to the National Elections Commission (NEC), to minimize said deficiencies before a run-off election was implemented. The recommendations included: the immediate training of NEC's polling staff due to the high percentage (7.2%) of Invalid Ballots; additional voters' education and the need to alphabetize the Voters Registration Book in each polling station.

Since our Preliminary Statement, the WSR, cognizant of the mounting tensions and unease in the country with the declaration of the Writ of Prohibition, has: accelerated our advocacy with political parties and other stakeholders including successful mediation between youths of opposition political parties and the security forces; engaged in electorate education via our media engagements; and continued our dialogues with international agencies and Embassies to explain our current constitutional process. We continue to actively implement our mandate of "peace before, during and after elections" by the WSR entering into a collaboration with the Liberian National Bar Association to broadcast to the electorate, legal education regarding the Supreme Court's opinion on the Writ of Prohibition; as well as to continue to intervene in assuring the smooth operation of the electoral process as we are doing today in Bong County where our observers are attending the recounting of ballots in District #4. Our 1010 short code is still operational in our call center.

The Women's Situation Room once again applauds Liberians for peacefully going to vote on October 10, 2017. We congratulate all candidates and their parties that filed petitions with the National Elections Commission (NEC) as mandated by our Constitution and Electoral Laws instead of taking to the streets with their dissatisfactions about the electoral process. We call on all political parties and politicians to continue to display maturity by keeping their supporters calm and waiting for our constitutional process to unfold as the aggrieved parties make their way through the process starting with the Magistrate in the NEC and then instituting the internal appeal process before the full Board of NEC's Commissioners and, if still not satisfied, accessing our Supreme Court- the final arbiter of electoral disputes under the Liberian Constitution.

We, Liberians, promulgated our Constitution in 1986. We are now involved in testing not only our constitution, but in upholding our rule of law. The Writ of Prohibition instituted by the Supreme Court stops and prohibits NEC from conducting the run-off election pending the disposition of electoral complaints before the NEC and disposition of any subsequent appeals to the Supreme Court. NEC has complied with the Writ of Prohibition and is now hearing the cases before it. We wait. Peacefully. We encourage NEC Board of Commissioners to expedite the hearing of the cases.

The end of both the current President of Liberia's term and those of the sitting members of the House of Representatives is in January 2018. Our Supreme Court has prioritized the elections cases and will hear them expeditiously. We ask everyone to let us move forward together to bring about a smooth democratic transition of power from the current government to a duly newly elected government in 2018.

We ask members of the media to present our current national situation in a less heated manner. We should not inflame people's feelings about this constitutional process. It was not invented by these people holding positions now. They are following a process that has been in existence in our Constitution since its inception in 1986. So long as the parties are following the procedures, let us wait patiently and observe carefully, to see how the process works out in whoever's favor it works out. This is what we have agreed to do as a society as immortalized in our constitution. It is in all our interest to wait patiently and peacefully.

THE PEACE OF LIBERIA IS IN OUR HANDS!!

