

NEW **National Election Watch**

A Coalition of Civic, Professional, Labour and Religious Organisations

OBSERVER MANUAL

Sierra Leone Presidential & Parliamentary Elections 2002



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NEW

National Election Watch

National Election Watch (NEW) Manual for Domestic Election Observers

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NATIONAL ELECTION WATCH (NEW)

List of Members

1. Sierra Leone Bar Association (SLBA)
2. Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU)
3. Sierra Leone Labor Congress (SLLC)
4. National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights (NCDHR)
5. Civil Society Movement (CSM-SL)
6. Council of Churches in Sierra Leone
7. Women's Forum
8. Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ)
9. National Forum for Human Rights (NFHR)
10. Movement for the Restoration of Democracy Sierra Leone (MRD-SL)
11. Network Movement for Justice and Peace
12. Center for the Coordination of Youth Activities (CCYA)
13. National Union of Sierra Leone Students (NUSS)
14. Campaign for Good Governance (CGG)
15. Academic Staff Association, University of Sierra Leone
16. Forum for Democratic Initiatives (FORDI)
17. Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone
18. Campaign Against Violent Events

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Why Domestic Election Monitoring?

The primary purpose of an independent "election watch" program is to enhance the transparency and increase the public's confidence in the election process. This objective exists whether the election occurs in a longstanding or in a new or transition democracy. In the context of transition elections, observers or watchers play a significant role in reassuring the public about the importance of the electoral process and the relevance of each voter's participation. Often in these environments, the public's only experience with politics concerns human rights abuses, fraudulent elections and military or autocratic rule. In these circumstances, basic notions of civic responsibility need reinforcement and anxieties must be overcome.

Publicity surrounding the formation of an observers' operation, coupled with the pre-election activities of observers and their presence at polling stations on Election Day, enhance public confidence and encourage citizen involvement in the process. Public statements and reports issued by observing groups may lead to changes in policies that promote fairness in subsequent elections. The presence of observers at polling sites may deter fraud, intimidation as well as reduce voting irregularities. In addition, when observers monitor the counting process through independent vote tabulation or other means, they provide an unbiased source for verifying official results.

Finally, a post-election report by an independent monitoring group may also influence the positions of electoral contestants regarding the overall legitimacy of the process. A relatively positive assessment should encourage acceptance of the results by all parties. By contrast, a negative critique may lead to rejection of the results if the process is deemed illegitimate.

In sum, it is important to observe or monitor elections for at least three reasons:

- To enhance public confidence
- To deter fraud, voting irregularities, violence, intimidation, and
- To verify the results

It is against this background that the 14 May 2002 elections in Sierra Leone assume great significance. The presidential and parliamentary elections of 14 May present a critical opportunity for the people to demonstrate their commitment to peace and democracy. After ten years of civil war, the people are ready for peace. A calm election process that earns the confidence of the people will help build the foundation for a peaceful and democratic future.

In the face of major administrative and logistical challenges, the success of the elections depends on the strength and perseverance of the Sierra Leonean people. Non partisan domestic election observers can help encourage people to participate in the elections. Domestic observers can also lessen the chance of violence before and after the elections by acting to record any irregularities and bring problems to the attention of the authorities. Finally, if an election is judged to reflect the will of the people, the findings of observers can help to build trust in the electoral outcome and the give legitimacy to the emergent leadership.

The National Election Watch Coalition

The National Election Watch (NEW) of Sierra Leone is a coalition of eighteen human rights, nongovernmental and civil society organizations dedicated to observing elections in the country. Formed in January 2002, NEW's membership represents the four geopolitical provinces and fourteen districts. The coalition draws its strength from the varied interests of its member organizations that have come together to demonstrate broad civic support for genuinely democratic and peaceful elections in Sierra Leone.

By observing the elections the NEW aims to:

- Promote citizens participation in the elections and generally in public life;
- Encourage a peaceful campaign and election environment;
- Deter possible election irregularities and fraud;
- Make recommendations to the National Election Commission; and
- Report findings to the public in an accurate and timely manner.

In order to observe and support the process, NEW observers must be familiar with it. This manual contains all the necessary information for ensuring effective observation of the elections. It includes guidelines for domestic observers, a summary of the electoral act and an overview of the role and responsibilities of a domestic observer on Election Day. In the case of a runoff in the presidential election, observers will also observe the second round, for which the procedure will be the same. Observers are encouraged to read the manual carefully and, if they have questions, to raise them during their training session. Observers should also bring the manual with them for reference on Election Day.

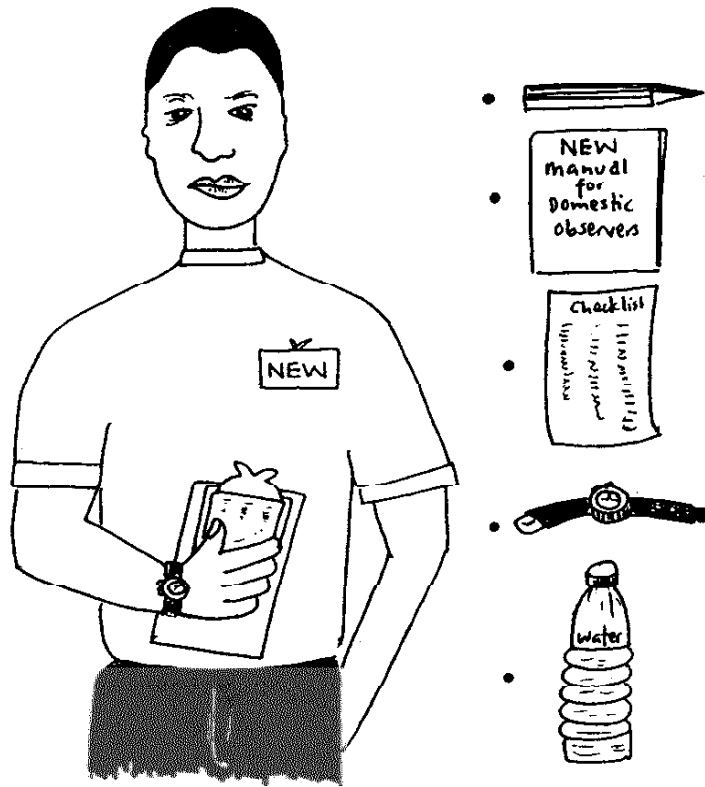
Affirmative Steps to Establish Credibility

In preparation for deploying observers to assess the elections, NEW will take four affirmative steps to establish its credibility:

1. **Maintain independence from partisan associations and promote an image of impartiality.** NEW may collaborate with other institutions before or during the elections. However, the coalition will be careful to avoid reliance on any person or group with partisan interests. If NEW decide to associate with any partisan interests, special precautions will be taken to ensure that the resulting image is balanced and does not appear to favor any electoral contestants.

NEW will promote an image of impartiality (also sometimes referred to as being neutral, nonpartisan, apolitical, independent or objective). The coalition understands that its credibility will be affected as well by the actions and reputation of staff. Similar to the approach of creating a condition or receiving contributions, NEW will avoid forming a committee that appears, from the combined associations of its individual members, to favor one political party. Similarly, staff and volunteers of NEW must pledge to refrain from working for, or exhibiting any public preference for the advancement or defeat of any political party or candidate. The primary concern of a non partisan group is to protect the integrity of the electoral process, regardless of who wins or loses. However, this directive does not, and should not, preclude observers from expressing their political choice in the privacy of the voting booth.

2. **NEW will communicate clearly and regularly.** Many observing groups are hesitant to publicize their activities. This tendency is prevalent in environments characterized by serious repression or political polarization. Nonetheless, NEW assumes that pursuing a policy of communicating openly with the political parties, the National Electoral Commission, the government and the media will enhance its credibility. It will present clearly and openly its objectives, goals, methodology and activities in order to answer questions and clarify any misunderstanding about the nature of its efforts. These communications may take the form of press conferences, press releases, advertisements, letters, telephone calls, or personal interviews. NEW will convey any relevant information before it conducts its activities. Such advance notice generally helps to deter fraud or intimidation and may also facilitate the execution of its activities.
3. **NEW will ensure the integrity of its plans and methodology.** The specific approach NEW employs to execute its activities becomes a liability if it is perceived to be unsound, unreasonable or unlikely to be achieved. This means that the plans for NEW will be designed to be logistically and financially feasible and must, assuming it is properly executed, appear capable of accomplishing established goals. The underlying assumptions of the approach must be sensible and valid if it is to maintain its integrity.
4. **Plans once laid out must be executed.** The best plan and methodologies will be irrelevant if they cannot be properly executed, in which case the operation will lose credibility. Good execution requires the proper personnel and resources and above all, good training. It is common for critics to accuse monitoring organizations of bias or incompetence, particularly when the organization is new. It is essential therefore for NEW to perform impartially, objectively and professionally in order to silence unreasonable critics and assure credibility



Chapter Two

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ELECTONS

The Electoral Laws Act, 2002, along with the Constitution of Sierra Leone, governs the conduct of elections. The National Election Commission can also issue instructions and changes called “administrative regulations” which election officials might have in the polling stations. The Act, the Constitutional provisions and NEC regulations constitute the legal framework for the elections. Below is a brief summary of the most important points of the legal framework.

Who can vote?

According to the Electoral Act, a person shall be eligible to vote if the following conditions are met:

- He/she is a citizen of Sierra Leone and has attained the age of 18 years.
- He/she is ordinarily a resident of the ward where he/she intends to vote.
- He/she is registered as a voter in the ward and has obtained a registration card to be presented at the Polling Station on the day of the election.
- Persons who have lost their registration cards may be allowed to vote if their names appear in the register and the Presiding Officer is satisfied that they have their identity.

Who does what in the elections?

The National Election Commission (NEC)

The NEC is responsible for conducting and overseeing the election process. The body consists of five commissioners – the Chairman and four others each of whom is responsible for overseeing a region of the country.

The following NEC officials are responsible for carrying out the election at various levels.

National Election Commissioner: Responsible for overseeing the conduct of elections in a region.

District/Returning Officer (DRO) : Responsible for the conduct and supervision of elections at the district level.

Assistant District Elections Officer: responsible for assisting the DRO in overseeing the conduct of elections at district level. This officer is mobile on election day.

Presiding Officer: responsible for the conduct of voting/counting at his/her polling station.

Polling Assistant (3 per polling station): responsible for assisting the Presiding Officer in the conduct of duties at the polling station.

Party Agents: In addition to competing in the election, the political parties have a strong motivation to protect their interests at the polling stations. The Electoral Act allows each political party to appoint two persons as **party agents** to monitor the balloting process. Notice of appointment for these agents must be given by the party to the District Elections Officer three days before Election Day.

Election Observers – Domestic and International

In addition to the National Election Watch, other international and local organizations will be observing the elections. International organizations that may observe the

elections include the Commonwealth, ECOWAS, the European Union and the African Union. When you see other local and international observers greet them and introduce yourself as NEW observer. If any of them has questions for you about the process, be helpful and courteous.

What is the proper role of security forces?

The police and UNAMSIL have an important role to play in ensuring a peaceful and safe environment for elections. The NEC plans to have one unarmed police officer at each of the approximately 5000 polling stations. In addition, UNAMSIL forces will provide patrol teams who can rush to any polling station where there is a security problem. While security forces serve an important role by keeping order at the polling station, they should not in any way obstruct the process or intimidate voters.

What is an electoral offence?

The Electoral Act outlines specific violations or electoral offences that carry stiff penalties. Such violations include interference with the election process or materials, bribery and intimidation, multiple voting, impersonation and other illegal acts.

What are Voters' Rights?

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights forms the basis for the idea that the right to participate in government is an internationally recognized human right:

The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections, which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures (Article 21,3)

International law and the Sierra Leone Constitution guarantee certain electoral rights and principles to all citizens. The key principles are:

- **Secret ballot** – Voters have the right to cast a secret vote, and no one has the right to ask whom they voted for.
- **Universal and equal suffrage** – All citizens over 18 years old have the right to register and vote in the election. Each person's vote has equal value.
- **Non-discrimination** – Voters should be allowed to cast their ballot without regard to their race, sex, religion, national origin, language or any other basis.

Chapter Three CONDUCT FOR OBSERVERS

Electoral Commissions in most countries issue regulations for civic groups observing elections. These guidelines, often called Codes Of Conduct, are developed to ensure that:

- **Election observation is done with integrity and transparency**
- **Election officials are left alone to do their work**

At a minimum, Electoral Commission regulations prescribe that:

- An observer shall not touch any election material or equipment without the express consent of the Presiding Officer or the Returning Officer.
- An observer shall maintain strict impartiality in the course of observing the election and shall at no time indicate or express any bias or preference for any political party or Candidate contesting the election.
- An observer shall not carry or wear or display on his or her person any electioneering materials or any article of clothing or any insignia denoting support or opposition to any party or candidate contesting the election.
- An observer shall not carry arms or any offensive weapon during the conduct of his or her duties as an election observer.
- An observer shall take reasonable steps to substantiate every statement or information provided in connection with the conduct of the elections.
- An observer shall comply with any lawful directive issued by or under the authority of the NEC, including an order to leave a polling station or Collation Center given by the officer in charge of the place.

The Voluntary Code Of Conduct Developed by Civic Organizations in Sierra Leone

On September 16, 2002, sixteen organizations -- Civic Groups, Trade Unions, Professional Associations and Religious Institutions -- came together in a retreat held at Milton Margai College to develop a Code of Conduct for Domestic Election Observers in Sierra Leone. The code was developed to guide the organizations present in their own efforts and, it was hoped, to serve as a standard that other groups would want to follow. The organizations present came together in the belief that there was a pressing need for a common understanding of the ethical framework for citizen observation of the electoral process if a domestic observation effort was to move forward. Since then, The National Election Watch Coalition has formed and has adopted the Code developed at the retreat.

Code of Conduct

Voluntary Standards For Domestic Election Observation in Sierra Leone

Adopted on Sept 16th, 2002 at Milton Margai College

We members of Civic Organizations, aware of the role domestic election monitoring plays in ensuring free and fair elections; and concerned to safeguard the integrity, impartiality and effectiveness of monitoring efforts, have voluntarily come together and agreed upon a code of conduct for election monitoring. We hope that others interested in monitoring elections in Sierra Leone will adopt this code.

We have learned from experience the grave need for a spirit of non-violence, non-discrimination and the observance of human rights in the conduct of our democracy and it is in this spirit that we commit ourselves to this code.

WE WILL BE IMPARTIAL AND NON-PARTISAN

Monitors shall in all cases act, speak or write without prejudice or preference towards any political party or candidate, region, ethnic group or persons.

WE WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH THE ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES, POLITICAL PARTIES OR VOTERS

Monitors shall observe and report on election related activities and shall not interfere with the actions of authorities or any participant in the election. Monitors must not attempt to influence the voter, nor direct or obstruct the electoral process.

WE WILL OBSERVE ALL RELEVANT LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS

Monitors must know the laws, rules and regulations that guide the conduct of elections and must strictly adhere to these laws and regulations in the performance of their functions.

Monitors may bring irregularities to the attention of relevant authorities and to the public but will not give instructions to electoral officials.

WE WILL MAINTAIN A CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH ELECTION AUTHORITIES AND POLITICAL PARTIES

Monitors shall maintain a respectful and principled relationship with election authorities and with political parties.

Monitors must never receive any reward or favor from an election official or on behalf of a political party or candidate. This may influence their judgment.

WE WILL COOPERATE IN OBSERVING THE ELECTIONS

Organizations conducting domestic monitoring programs should endeavor to work together by sharing information, regularly interacting and developing common procedures for reporting.

Domestic Monitors should also cooperate and coordinate with international observers.

WE WILL REPORT IN A NEUTRAL, ACCURATE AND VERIFIABLE MANNER

Monitors must report events and issues impartially and objectively. The events and issues so reported must contain scene, incident, time and persons involved.

Guidelines for NEW Observers

The following guidelines are based on the NEC prescriptions and the NEW Code of Conduct as presented above.

Observers MUST:

- Be punctual, prepared and alert for training and on Election Day.
- Carry their NEC accreditation letter to permit access to polling stations and other electoral sites.
- Wear any official items issued by NEW to identify themselves and introduce themselves to polling officials and any other authorities.
- Maintain strict impartiality in the conduct of their duties without expressing any preference toward a political party, candidate, region or ethnic group.
- Base all their conclusions on well-documented, factual and verifiable evidence and carefully fill out Election Day Checklist.
- Show respect and cooperate with election officials, security forces, party agents and other domestic and international observers.

NEW observers MUST NOT:

- Display or wear any partisan symbols, colors or anything else that might show allegiance to a political party or candidate.
- Interfere in any way with the voters and election officials or impede the election process.
- Give instructions to polling officials or try to mediate disputes.
- Speak to the media or other persons about their observations or the nature of the election process.
- Receive any reward or favor from an election official or on behalf of a political party of candidate.

Responsibility of Election Observers

At the polling station and Collation Centers observers are entitled to:

- Observe all the stages of the voting process, except where the voter is thumb-making his or her ballot paper.
- Be present to view the display and sealing of the empty ballot box before polling begins;
- Write observations about positive aspects of the voting process as well as questionable or irregular practices;
- Address all questions and comments to the electoral officer or Presiding Officer;
- Talk freely with voters outside the polling station except to ask how they intend to vote or voted;
- Leave and re-enter the polling station and move quietly about to observe the proceedings although they may not actively participate or interfere in the process;
- Bring questionable activities to the attention of the Electoral or Presiding Officer.

Chapter Four

OBSERVING THE ELECTON DAY

This chapter gives detailed explanation of the Election Day procedures, based on the Electoral Act and the principles of independent monitoring. It outlines what observers should look for at each stage in the polling process. Observers will watch carefully the entire process and record their findings in the Checklist provided. Any irregularities witnessed should be recorded in detail.

Observers must remember the following important tips on **Polling Day**:

- Get plenty of rest the night before the elections
- Bring necessary items: accreditation letter, NEW ID badge, this Manual, Checklist, pen/pencil, a watch, and water and possibly a packed lunch.
- Arrive at the assigned polling station at **6:00 AM**, one hour before the station is opened.
- Polling stations open for voting at **7:00 AM and close at 5:00 PM**
- Polling stations should be clearly marked and easy to find
- No political party propaganda is allowed in the vicinity of polling stations
- Before the start of voting, the Presiding Officer must demonstrate to any observers present that each ballot box is empty and seal each box using the official seal
- The Presiding Officer should place the ballot box in full view of all present and set up a booth or enclosure where voters can vote in secret
- Before the start of voting, all polling station personnel should be present and all election materials should be at the polling station in a safe place.

The Voting Process

The following process will be followed for voting:

- Voters enter one at a time from the queue at the entrance of the polling station
- The polling official checks the thumb of the voter for any traces of indelible ink
- The polling official asks for the voter's registration card and checks for the name in the voters' register.
**voters on the list who do not produce their registration cards may be allowed to vote provided they can prove their identify to the polling officials.
** polling officials can ask voters questions to verify their identity.
- The polling official marks the ballot paper with the official mark of the NEC, mark the voter's registration number on the counterfoil, and place a mark next to the voter's registration number in the voters' register to show that a ballot has been issued to that voter.
- The polling official issues a ballot to the voter and applies indelible ink to the left thumb of the voter.
- The voter takes his/her ballot to the secret booth and puts a mark next to the symbol of the party of his/her choice. He/she places the ballot in the ballot box labelled for the parliamentary election.
**If a voter spoils a ballot or marks it incorrectly, he/she can return it to the Presiding Officer who will mark it "SPOILT" and issue a new ballot.
**A voter incapacitated by blindness or other physical disability may be accompanied to the secret booth by another voter of his/her choice.

****A voter who is illiterate may mark their ballot with a thumbprint using ink provided in the booth.**

- After casing the presidential ballot, the voter goes to the polling officer for a parliamentary ballot and follows the same procedure.
- Voters who because of official duties or employment will be in another polling station from where they registered may apply 15 days prior to Election Day for a "certificate of authorization" to allow them to vote in another polling station. Returned refugees may also apply for the certificate.
- **Voters with valid "certificate of authorization" should be permitted to vote by the Presiding Officer.**

Closing balloting and the polling station

- The hours of voting end at 5:00 PM; however, the Presiding Officer should not declare the polling station closed until all the voters waiting in line at the hour of closing have voted.
- After the close of voting, the Presiding Officer should put into separate packets and seal: the ballot boxes (unopened and sealed), the unused and spoiled ballot papers, the marked copies of the Voters' Registers and the counterfoils of the used ballots.
- The Presiding Officer should prepare the "Ballot Papers Account" that accounts for the number of unused ballots, certificates of authorization, spoiled ballots and the number of persons marked in the voter registry as having been issued ballots.
- Counting of votes should begin immediately

Counting the Votes

- Each contesting political party may name one "counting agent" per polling station to observe the vote count.
- As soon as possible after the close of voting and completion of the ballot counting, the Presiding Officer should begin the counting process. Only the Presiding Officer, polling assistants, counting agents and any observers are permitted to be present during the counting process.
- The Presiding Officer opens each ballot box, removes the ballots and separates those cast for the Parliamentary election from those cast for the Presidential election.
- In full view of the counting agents and observers, the Presiding Officer counts the votes for each election, separating the votes for each party or candidate.
- Any ballot that lacks the official mark of the polling station, clearly identifies the voter (except by fingerprint), has more than one choice marked, or that is blank will be marked "REJECTED" and will not be counted. If a party Counting Agent objects to the decision, "REJECTION OBJECTED TO" will be written on the ballot.
- The Presiding Officer will count any ballot that clearly indicates the intent of the voter, even if by other than a cross or fingerprint.
- After the count, the Presiding Officer seals separate packets for the votes from each political party or candidate with the name of the party on the packet.
- The Presiding Officer also prepares a "statement of the result of the poll" and certifies copies for distribution to the National Returning Officer, Regional

- Returning Officer, District Returning Officer, each counting agent present and himself.
- The Presiding Officer places the sealed envelopes with the counted ballots, rejected ballots and other election documents into the ballot box, seals it with his seal and asks any counting agents present to place their own seals on the box.
 - The sealed box remains in the custody of the Presiding Officer until it can be transported to the Returning Officer.

Watch these “Things”

Observers should focus attention on the following three general components of observation: 1) environment at the polling station; 2) environment outside the polling station; 3) completing and submitting the Checklist.

(1) Environment at the Polling Station

Location and Arrangement: Upon arriving at the polling station an observer should assess the environment. The first step in the process is to observe how the station has been arranged.

- The physical structure and design of the polling station should guarantee secrecy of the ballot.
- The polling station’s design and the system by which voters proceed through the steps of voting should be adequate to maintain a process that is orderly and efficient.

Staffing: Observers must take note of who is present inside the polling station. Only authorized persons and people in the act of voting should be present inside the perimeter of the station.

- First, determine if any election official is absent or have been replaced and the consequences of this development on the voting.
- Second, determine which political parties and other domestic or international observers are present.
- Third, note whether there are unauthorized persons inside the station and the effect of their presence.

Materials: The observer should examine the availability and positioning of election materials. The materials – including the voters register, ballot papers, indelible ink, ballot box, seal, polling booth, tables, etc. – should be present in adequate numbers to enable the voting to proceed fairly smoothly.

Conduct of Election Officials: Election officials are responsible for administering the voting process in accordance with prescribed laws and regulations. As an observer of the process, you should observe and record the conduct of election officials in order to deter fraud, to help correct inadvertent mistakes, as well as to detect and record actual irregularities. Overall, the observer should carefully evaluate whether officials:

- Understand the prescribed procedure;
- Effectively apply and enforce the procedures;
- Maintain strict impartiality and, when providing assistance, demonstrate appropriate discretion and respect for the secrecy of the vote;

- Establish an orderly environment in which all eligible voters have a reasonable opportunity to vote and feel free from undue influence; and
- Respect the rights of observers and political party agents.

Conduct of Voters: The observers must also observe the conduct of voters. A genuine and meaningful election presumes that voters understand both the voting procedures and the policies of the candidates or the substance of the issues being voted upon. Since a voter's level of comprehension about these issues affects the amount of time he/she requires to complete the voting process, a low level of understanding may cause delay in the process.

(2) Environment outside the Polling Station

The conduct of prospective voters and others outside the polling station but within sight from the station should be observed. The observer should look for incidents of undue influence or intimidation. In so doing, try to identify the target, the source, the form and the impact of the incident. These problems that at the minimum violate the principle of secrecy of the vote, may be directed at the voters in the queue or at election officials. Potential sources of intimidation include election officials, political partisans who behave in an overzealous manner or members of the security forces. You should attempt to document relevant events and measure the magnitude of any incident.

Important questions to address in your report include the following:

- Did voters disregard the attempted intimidation; were they influenced by it, or were they ultimately prevented from voting?
- How many voters were affected by the incident/
- What were the identities (or descriptions) and associations of people involved in the incident?
- How was the situation resolved?

In assessing the counting process, the observer's evaluation should be based upon the degree to which:

- Ballots were counted accurately, reflecting the choices expressed by the voters;
- Ballots that were ruled invalid or irregular are properly identified and, ideally, preserved for review;
- The results of the count (also called the returns) are transmitted to the appropriate authorities, who tabulates them accurately and are reported to the political contestants or their representatives, the election observers and the public as provided by law and in a timely manner;
- The processes of counting ballots, transmitting and tabulating the results were conducted in a transparent manner.

When observing the count, observers should be vigilant for the following possible irregularities:

- Violation of the integrity of the ballot box (e.g., broken locks or seals, prematurely opened boxes, etc.);

- Improper counting procedures (e.g., tearing or marking ballots to invalidate them; failing to record valid ballots according to the clearly expressed intention of the voter; adding pre-marked or invalidated ballots to the contents of the ballot box; substituting, stealing or destroying ballot or entire ballot boxes, etc.);
- Intimidation of conducting officials or observers;
- Errors or omissions in computing or completing official tally sheets;
- Improper refusal to allow observers or others to observe the process or record complaints on the official tally sheet, and
- Failure to report results according to prescribed procedures or time period

(3) Completing and Submitting the Checklist

The Checklist should be completed as soon as the polls close and submitted to the District or Provincial Coordinator or their designated representatives who, in turn, will submit it to the NEW Secretariat in Freetown. The following points should be noted:

- Observers should carefully note all their findings on the Checklist
- The Checklist must be completed accurately and clearly, as others will have to read what you wrote;
- If you witnessed an irregularity in the process, note how many times it occurred and all details surrounding the incident. Irregularities should also be raised with the Presiding Officer.
- Any critical incidents involving violent acts or intimidation should be reported as quickly as possible to your District or Provincial Coordinator or their representatives.

SECURITY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The security, well-being and safety of NEW observers is of primary importance. All necessary precautions must therefore be taken to ensure that no observer's life or safety is jeopardized in any way. It is important for observers to understand that their role on Election Day is not that of a policeman or security personnel.

What to do when problems of conflict or violence arise

- Draw the attention of the presiding officer to the problem
- Draw the attention of the security personnel at the polling station to the problem
- Do not get involved directly in any altercation
- Withdraw from the scene immediately if you sense that your life could be threatened and move to a secure place.
- Do not return to the polling station until peace has been restored.
- Write a comprehensive report of the incident.

NEW National Election Watch

CHECKLIST FOR ELECTION OBSERVERS

Sierra Leone, 14 May 2002

Observers' Name..... Polling Station.....
 Arrival Time..... Ward
 Presiding Officer..... District
 Number of Registered Voters Province

BEFORE POLLING	Yes	No	Comments
Were all voting materials available?
Were all Party Agents present?
Ballot box was empty before start of polling
Ballot box was locked after it was shown to be empty?

DURING THE POLLING	Yes	No	Comments
Did the polling start on time?
Was order maintained within the polling station throughout the voting process?
Was security at the station adequate?
Was ballot box within sight all the same?
Did anyone interfere with the voting process
Did all voters vote in secrecy?

AFTER THE POLLING	Yes	No	Comments
Did the polling close on time?
Was the lock on ballot box broken?
Was counting conducted in the presence of party agents, observers and the public?

THE RESULT

Total Ballots Issued: Total Rejected: Total Valid Votes:

Parliamentary SLPP....UNPP....GAP....PDP....NDA....YPP....RUFPP....APC....
 MOP....CUPP....

Presidential SLPP....UNPP.... GAP....YPP....RUFPP....APC....MOP....CUPP....

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS (circle one response)

The elections were: (a) free & fair (b) partially free & fair (c) not free & not fair

Conduct of Electoral Commission officers: (a) satisfactory (b) unsatisfactory

Signature of Observer.....
 Departure Time Date

NEW National Elections Watch

INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Observer's Name..... Polling Station.....
Presiding Officer Ward
Time of Incident District

Instructions: Please be objective since any evidence of partisan bias in your report may undermine its credibility. Provide factual details about the incident. Be sure to indicate whether the information you report was heard or seen directly by you or not.

1. What is the **nature of the incident?** (circle one or more of the listed options)

- a. Violence (physical attack or destruction of property/materials)
- b. Intimidation (threats of violence or other kinds of pressure)
- c. Harassment (chanting or shouting or taunting at voters)
- d. Improper Voting or Counting procedures
- e. Material (insufficient ballot paper or other voting materials)

2. Provide a brief **factual description** of the incident, including:

- a. who are involved; their position and affiliation: Party/Security Agent?
- b. Where exactly did the incident occur
- c. Describe the sequence of events (attach additional paper if necessary)

.....
.....
.....

3. Who was/were the **victim(s)** of the incident?

- Political Party (specify).....
- Security Agent (specify).....
- Voter
- Other

4. How many **voters or votes** do you estimate were **affected by the incident**, if any?

Explain the basis of your estimate:

.....

5. Name the **Election Official** who was informed

6. Name 3 **witnesses** to the incident 1)
2)
3)

Observer's Signature:

..... Date Time.....

