



NATIONAL ELECTION WATCH

A Coalition of Civic and Non-Governmental Organizations

2 MIK Drive, Murray Town, Freetown.
+232-76-737-231 | nationalelectionwatchsl@gmail.com

27th JUNE 2023 – INDEPENDENT NON-PARTISAN ASSESSMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS STATEMENT

To monitor the credibility of the 24th June 2023 presidential, parliamentary and local council elections, National Election Watch (NEW) deployed 6,000 observers across the country covering every polling centre. Out of these observers, 750 were specially trained and deployed to a statistically representative sample of polling stations across all the 5 regions and 16 districts in Sierra Leone using the Process and Results Verification for Transparency (PRVT) methodology. The PRVT allows NEW to assess the quality of election day processes and verify the accuracy of the official election results announced by the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone (ECSL). NEW conducted its observation in a strictly independent and non-partisan manner on behalf of all Sierra Leoneans to ensure that the results announced are accurate and verifiable.

PRVT is an advanced and proven election monitoring methodology used by citizen election observation groups around the world that allows for the independent and impartial assessment of the quality of election day processes and the official results. The deployment of observers and their reports are strictly impartial. On election day, NEW deployed specialised observers to a statistical sample of polling stations, where they examined crucial aspects of voting and counting at assigned polling stations, reported on strengths and irregularities that impacted on the quality of the election and noted the number of ballots cast and the votes recorded by officials for each candidate at the polling station. NEW's PRVT analysis is based on data from polling stations, before it proceeds to other tabulation processes, where transparency was limited.

NEW's PRVT exercise in the 2023 election draws on its experience in successfully executing PRVTs to observe the 2018, 2012, and 2007 elections in Sierra Leone. In all three of these elections, NEW's projections matched the official results of the Electoral Commission. Unfortunately, in 2023, we find that the published results of ECSL are inconsistent with our PRVT data. In line with the statement released earlier on June 27, titled "PRVT Update: Partial Election Results Released by ECSL", this statement seeks to share NEW's PRVT data to the public as follows:

PRVT results assessment

Based on reports from 99% (747 of 750) of sampled polling stations, NEW's statistical analysis shows that:

- Voter turnout is between 75.4% and 79% (a point estimate of 77.3% with a margin of error of +/-1.7%), while ECSL's official result is 83.0%.
- Rejected ballots are between 4.5% and 5.7% (a point estimate of 5.1% with a margin of error of $\pm 0.6\%$) while ECSL's official result is 0.4%. The percentage of invalid votes is inconsistent not only with the PRVT data, but also with past elections. In 2018, rejected ballots for the first round were 5.2%, 4.7% in 2012, and 7.3% in 2007.
- The candidate of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) should receive between 47.7% and 53.1% (a point estimate of 50.4% with a margin of error of +/- 2.7%) of the vote while ECSL's official result is 56.1%;
- The candidate of the All People's Congress (APC) should receive between 43.8% and 49.2% (a point estimate of 46.5% with a margin of error of +/- 2.7%) of the vote while ECSL's official result is 41.2%;

Therefore, no candidate should have met the constitutional threshold of 55% to avoid a runoff.

Table 1: Comparison of ECSL Official Results and NEW's PRVT data

Candidate	ECSL	NEW PRVT				Assessment of Official Results
	Official	NEW PRVT Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimated Range		
				Lower Limit	Upper Limit	
BAH, Mohamed Chernoh	0.8%	0.8%	0.1%	0.7%	0.9%	Consistent
BIO, Julius Maada	56.2%	50.4%	2.7%	47.7%	53.1%	INCONSISTENT
COKER, Prince	0.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	Consistent
JONJO, Mohamed	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	Consistent
KABUTA, Saa Henry	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	Consistent
KAKAY, Iye	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	Consistent
KAMARA, Nabieu Musa	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%	0.8%	Consistent
KAMARA, Samura Mathew Wilson	41.2%	46.5%	2.7%	43.8%	49.2%	INCONSISTENT
MARGAI, Charles	0.6%	0.6%	0.1%	0.5%	0.7%	Consistent
SACCOH, Abdulai Dougakoro	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%	Consistent
SANDY, Jonathan Patrick	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	Consistent
SOWA-TURAY, Mohamed	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	Consistent
WILLIAMS, Beresford Victor	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	Consistent
Invalid Votes	0.4%	4.8%	0.4%	4.4%	5.2%	INCONSISTENT

Analysis of Official Results

Based on the ECSL official release of results by district, NEW's analysis shows there are inconsistencies in the results.

- The total valid ballots cast as announced by the ECSL for the first batch of results (representing 60% of polling stations) shows an average of 269 valid voters per polling station, while the second batch (representing 40% of polling stations) has an average of only 188 valid votes per polling station.
- Where the average number of voters for each polling station appeared to be set at 300, some polling stations had an excessive number of voters. For example: For eight of the districts in the first batch and for one district in the second batch, the average number of valid votes per polling station is more than 300, and the practice is that the last polling station in a polling centre does not have more than 400 voters. The vast majority of polling stations have 300 voters or less, including more than 84% of the polling stations in each of these districts.

For example, according to official ECSL results, polling stations (PS) in the first batch (60%) of results in Bombali (433 PS) have an average of 340 valid votes, while the second batch (40%) of polling stations (288 PS) have an average of 39 valid votes per polling station. In total, Bombali has only 57 polling stations that have 340 or more registered voters, which would make this average a statistical impossibility. In Kailahun polling stations in the first batch of results (407 PS) have an average of 378 valid votes, while the remaining 40% of polling stations (272 PS) have an average of 113 valid votes per polling station. In total, Kailahun has only 22 polling stations that have 378 or more registered voters, which would make this average a statistical impossibility.

In total, for 9 of the 16 districts, the official ECSL results show that more than 300 valid votes were cast per polling station despite the vast majority of polling stations having a maximum of 300 voters. Analysis of this official data demonstrates over 100% turnout in polling stations in 9 of 16 districts (see table below).

Table 2: Analysis of Official ECSL Presidential Results

Region	District	ECSL First Batch of Official Results			ECSL Second Batch of Official Results		
		Valid Votes	Polling Stations Reporting	Average Valid Votes Per Polling Station	Valid Votes	Remaining Polling Stations	Average Valid Votes Per Polling Station
East	Kailahun	153,668	407	378	30,825	272	113
East	Kenema	208,200	676	308	94,230	451	209
East	Kono	47,061	370	127	78,051	246	317
South	Bo	216,593	664	326	73,033	442	165
South	Bonthe	76,260	230	332	26,312	154	171
South	Moyamba	87,385	322	271	46,183	215	215

Region	District	ECSL First Batch of Official Results			ECSL Second Batch of Official Results		
		Valid Votes	Polling Stations Reporting	Average Valid Votes Per Polling Station	Valid Votes	Remaining Polling Stations	Average Valid Votes Per Polling Station
South	Pujehun	77,114	253	305	29,587	169	175
North	Bombali	147,041	433	340	11,221	288	39
North	Falaba	28,987	150	193	26,305	100	263
North	Koinadugu	36,038	185	195	18,772	124	151
North	Tonkolili	75,507	437	173	80,854	292	277
North west	Kambia	97,730	328	298	12,757	219	58
North west	Karene	66,984	215	312	6,220	144	43
North west	Port Loko	155,454	502	310	17,303	334	52
West	Western Area Rural	176,250	697	253	112,136	464	242
West	Western Area Urban	261,131	1,229	212	214,616	820	262
	Total	1,911,403	7,098	269	889,228	4,734	188

Conclusion

The integrity of an election is measured by the transparency, fairness, accountability and inclusivity of its processes and actors. NEW calls on the ECSL to release all polling station-level results to increase transparency and allow for independent analysis.

NEW thanks its observers and member organisations for their dedication to our country's democracy.

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