

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ECC Strongly Condemns the Wave of Electoral Violence, Harassment and Intimidation in Gbarpolu County:

The Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC) strongly condemns the wave of electoral violence that is escalating in Electoral District 3, Gbarpolu County linked to the conduct of the Special Senatorial Election (SSE). This trend of violence, harassment and intimidation of a female candidate is unacceptable and a deliberate attempt to influence the outcome of the remaining election that is scheduled to take place in Norman Town, Precinct Number 45039. The ECC also frowns on the behavior of traditional leaders tempering with the conduct of an election which is constitutionally mandated and is concerned about the lack of action taken by the government to hold the Paramount Chief accountable. These lawless behaviors undermine the rule of law and have the propensity to reverse gains made in peace and democratic consolidation.

Since Sunday, December 13, 2020 the ECC has been receiving updates from Gbarpolu County, Electoral District 3 on constant wave of violence, intimidation and harassment of the Independent Candidate madam Botoe Kanneh who has since been arrested by armed men believed to be state securities base and her whereabouts remain unknown. In the same manner, the brother of Ms. Kanneh, Cllr. Boakai Kanneh was allegedly ordered beaten by the traditional group in Norman, Gbarpolu electoral district 3 where the election was expected to take place on today, Tuesday December 15, 2020.

The National Elections Commission has earlier rescheduled this election from the official December 8, 2020 date due to seizure of the ballot box by the town chief of Norman. According to the ECC observer in the electoral district, a checkpoint has been erected at the entry of the town where the election was expected to take place on today intended to prevent candidates from entering to avoid undue tension. However, reports from ECC observers indicate that it is Candidate Kanneh and her supporters that being harassed by the traditional group and security officers.

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The ECC calls on the government and the National Elections Commission to immediately investigate the situation and take concrete punitive actions against the perpetrators in keeping with law. The ECC also wishes to implore all state securities to demonstrate neutrality and professionalism in dealing with all electoral stakeholders and implore measures to prevent any further election related violence.

About the ECC and Observation of the 2020 Senatorial Elections and Referendum

The Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC) is a civil society platform, comprising six (6) organizations that observe elections in Liberia. The members include: Center for Democratic Governance (CDG); Center for Media Studies and Peace Building (CEMESP); Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD); Naymote Partners for Democratic Development (NAYMOTE-PADD); West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP), and the Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL).

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