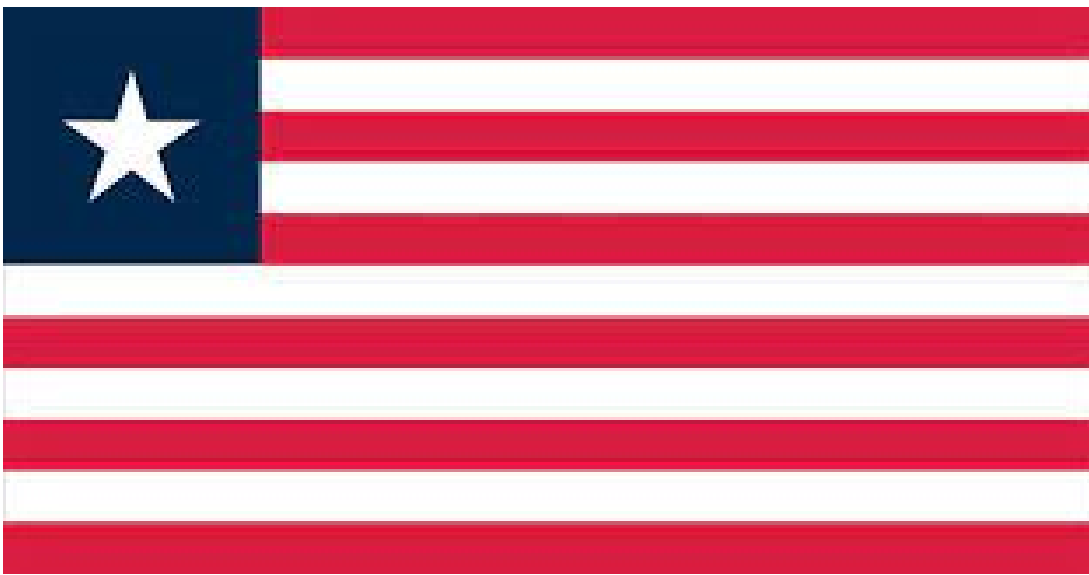




EISA-IEOM PRE-ELECTION ASSESSMENT REPORT To the Liberia 2023 General Elections



6 October 2023

ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
AU	African Union
ANC	Alternative National Congress.
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CVE	Civic and Voter Education
CBOs	Community-Based Organizations
CDC	Congress for Democratic Change/Coalition for Democratic Change
CPP	Collaborating Political Parties
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
ECC	Elections Coordinating Committee
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDA	Elections and Democracy Activity
EISA	Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa
EMB	Election Management Body
EU	European Union
ICC	International Criminal Court
IEOM	International Election Observation Mission
FRR	Final Registration Roll
INCHR	Independent National Commission on Human Rights
IPCC	Inter-Party Consultative Committee
LBS	Liberia Broadcasting Service
LISGIS	Liberian Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services
LEON	Liberia Election Observation Network
LESP	Liberia Elections Support Project
LNP	Liberia National Police
LTOs	Long Term Election Observers
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEC	National Elections Commission
NOUD	National Union of Organisations for the Disabled
OMR	Optical Mark Recognition
PWD	Person with Disability
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
WADEMOS	West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network
STO	Short-Term Observers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UP	Unity Party
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) conducted this pre-election assessment exercise as part of its deliverables under the USAID-funded International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) Activity which enhances the integrity of the 2023 Liberia Presidential and Legislative elections through the deployment of an independent International Election Observer Mission (EOM) to monitor, assess and report on all phases of the electoral process by international and regional benchmarks. This project is part of EISA's commitment to strengthening democracy, citizen participation, and robust public institutions in Africa and aligns with EISA's vision for a peaceful African continent characterized by democratic governance, human rights, and citizen engagement. This pre-election general assessment of the election process summarizes observations to date from EISA's long-term observers and offers several recommendations on steps to increase public confidence in the election as election day approaches.

EISA set up its physical office in Monrovia, Liberia in January 2023. The office is led by the Country Director, International Election Expert and Finance and Administration Manager. 12 International Long-Term Observers have been engaged under the coordination of the International Observer Coordinator. The EISA international team is supported by a team of thematic experts, including a legal analyst, media analyst, gender and social inclusion specialist, security analyst, and a mission assistant.

The development of this report was guided by the following objectives:

1. To assess the political and pre-election environment leading up to Liberia's Presidential and Legislative elections scheduled for 10 October 2023, with a focus on its conformity to normative standards for democratic elections and Liberia's national election laws and regulations.
2. To gather perspectives of key election stakeholders on the pre-election processes.
3. To demonstrate international support for a democratic electoral process in Liberia by sharing timely, constructive recommendations to improve current and future electoral processes in Liberia.
4. To evaluate the readiness of key election stakeholders including the Election Management Body [EMB].

In its assessment of Liberia's constitutional and legal framework, the EISA IEOM finds that the framework provides a sufficient and sound basis for conducting credible elections. However, it notes that certain constitutional reforms intended to address issues from previous electoral processes were not implemented in time for the 2023 elections. These

proposed reforms included changing presidential and senatorial term lengths, introducing obligatory gender quotas for political parties, alternating electoral magistrates between counties, moving the election date to drier months from the rainy season, and the powers & responsibilities of NEC magistrates. The legal framework remains weak in terms of ensuring the inclusion and effective representation of women, youth, and vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities.

Challenges such as voter trucking, campaign finance regulations, and outdated electoral district boundaries were identified as areas of concern. Election dispute resolution mechanisms were established, but their effectiveness would be determined post-election based on their implementation.

The report acknowledges the efforts of the National Elections Commission (NEC) in enhancing transparency, including the introduction of innovations like Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) and localizing civic education through Civic and Voter Education (CVE) cells. However, the NEC faced challenges related to budget allocation, procurement delays, infrastructure issues, and gender representation.

The assessment offers recommendations to address these challenges and enhance the electoral process's transparency and inclusivity. Liberia's commitment to international best practices, human rights, and equal citizen participation will be crucial in ensuring the success of the 2023 elections. EISA remains committed to supporting Liberia's democratic journey and fostering democratic governance, human rights, and citizen engagement in Africa.

As Liberia prepares for the October 10, 2023, elections, all political parties are urged to adhere to the Farmington Declaration and respect electoral rules and regulations.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE ELECTIONS

2.1 Historical Background

Liberia's history has suffered through a series of civil wars that occurred from December 1989 to August 2003. These conflicts brought immense suffering to the country. In August 2003, a peace deal was signed in Ghana, leading to the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to provide security and monitor the peace accord. An interim government took power during this period. The 2005 elections marked a turning point in Liberia's history, as they

were internationally recognized as genuine elections and resulted in the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as the first female president in Africa.

Efforts to address the legacy of conflict included the extradition of Charles Taylor, the former warlord and president, to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity related to the Sierra Leone civil war. He was found guilty and sentenced to 50 years in prison in 2012. Additionally, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established in 2006 to address the causes and crimes of the civil war, but its final report has yet to be implemented and some of those implicated in the hearings continue to operate within Liberian politics and society today.

Since 2005, Liberia has experienced an open and competitive multi-party-political landscape. The recent 2017 elections marked a historic moment as Liberia achieved a peaceful alternation of power between an outgoing president and an elected successor. The 2023 elections are, therefore, significant for Liberia's continued transition to democracy and peace. These elections are being conducted primarily by Liberian authorities, with Liberian security forces taking sole responsibility for the security of the 2023 elections following the exit of UNMIL in 2018. Tensions in the political space, mistrust in key institutions, hate speech, limited institutional capacity, delayed budget allocation to the National Elections Commission (NEC), and concerns about arms circulation and youth mobilization for potential violence are some of the challenges facing Liberians as they prepare for the 2023 elections.

2.2 Context of the 2023 General Elections

Several factors shape the context of the 2023 election:

1. The elections will mark the first nationwide elections conducted under the leadership of the current National Elections Commission (NEC).
2. Liberia is scheduled to hold its fourth consecutive General Elections on October 10, 2023, since its return to democratic rule. Notably, these 2023 General Elections will be organised primarily by Liberian authorities, with minimal technical or financial support from the international community, and no input from the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), which concluded its mission on March 30, 2018.
3. The Liberian economy has faced significant challenges due to the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Consequently, the Government's financial support to NEC has been erratic, with disbursements coming in stages. This has at times resulted in delays in the Electoral Calendar, disrupting NEC's plans and necessitating tighter, compressed timelines.

4. To address concerns raised during the 2017 electoral process and by regional best practices, NEC has introduced Biometric Voter Registration (BVR). This BVR system will compile the voter registration register for the 2023 elections. The decision to implement a BVR system for the 2023 elections was based on previous recommendations regarding the management of the voter's roll, aiming to ensure a transparent and fair process. The selected BVR system utilizes technology to capture and store biometric data, including fingerprints, facial recognition, and iris scans of voters. However, citizens' trust in the BVR technology is low.
5. Most of the political parties and candidates consulted by EISA-IEOM who interacted have a general knowledge of the existing frameworks that regulate elections in Liberia. However, most of them particularly those from the opposition did not trust that the NEC would be impartial and effective in the application of some of the laws, especially those that regulate the behaviour of political parties and candidates. Some of them also did not trust the new registration system, which used the BVR technology and are still convinced that the system will be used on voting day which is not true. According to the latest Afrobarometer survey¹ 34% of Liberians do not trust the NEC, however, the majority of Liberians believe that their last national elections were free, fair and transparent and were free, and transparent.

3. THE CONSTITUTIONAL, LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK GOVERNING THE ELECTIONS

3.1 Constitutional and Legal Framework

The Constitution

The 1986 Constitution of Liberia is the supreme and fundamental law governing the country. Its provisions must be strictly adhered to as they have binding effects and authorities according to Article 2. Any laws, treaties, statutes, decrees, customs, and regulations inconsistent with the Liberian Constitution shall be declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Liberia following the Supreme Court's constitutional authority. It is important to note that the people of Liberia have inherent power as provided to them in Article 1 of the Constitution. This Constitution authorizes the people to institute authority for their benefit, change, and reform when their safety and happiness are required.

¹ <https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-trust-in-nec-remains-weak-new-afrobarometer-survey-shows/>

However, Article 1 of the 1986 Constitution mandates that any such change of government must be done democratically. The people shall have the right at such period, and in such manner as provided for under this Constitution, to cause their public servants to leave office and to fill vacancies by regular elections and appointments. The conduct of elections must be consistent with the 1986 Constitution, the Elections Law of the Republic of Liberia, other Administrative Regulations formulated by the NEC, other national legal instruments as well as international treaties and statutes.

The New Elections Law

The NEC operates independently from the government and is responsible for enforcing all laws related to elections in Liberia. This includes conducting all elections for public offices and referenda and handling voter registration, candidate nominations, and overall electoral management. Moreover, the commission has the authority to create and enforce guidelines that align with Liberia's constitution and election laws to control the election process. To ensure the smooth running of the 2023 Presidential and General Elections, the NEC has established additional administrative and legal instruments, such as the 2023 General Elections Regulations, Political Parties and Independent Candidates Regulations 2022, Voter Registration Regulations of 2022, 2023 Campaign Guidelines, Campaign Finance Regulations of 2022, Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Observers, and Hearing Regulations and Procedure. These instruments provide detailed guidance on various aspects of the election process.

The Liberian legal framework has not been able to deter the act of voter trucking during Liberian elections. EISA-IEOM notes that the lack of a legal framework that deals with voter trucking creates more questions than satisfactory responses. It is crucial to uphold the principle of equal protection for all individuals under the law, as stated in the Constitution, and ensure that elections are conducted in accordance with prescribed laws to maintain the integrity of the process. Adhering to the rule of law is not only constitutionally mandated but also essential, especially during elections. The law serves as the primary means to guarantee free, fair, and credible elections. It should be noted that Article 77 (b) of Liberia's 1986 Constitution grants the right to register and vote in public elections to any Liberian citizen aged 18 or older, except for those who have been judicially declared incompetent or of unsound mind.

Additionally, Section 5.2 of the Voters Registration Regulations 2022 requires voters to register in the areas where they ordinarily reside. However, the term "ordinarily resides" is not clearly defined in the statute, leading to ambiguity in legal interpretation. The requirement for voters to register in their locality of ordinary residence seems to conflict with Article 80 (c) of the Liberian Constitution. Article 80 (c) guarantees every Liberian citizen the right to register and vote in their constituency, either in person or via absentee ballot. While the Constitution is

explicit about constituencies, the election law lacks clarity regarding ordinary residency. This inconsistency potentially undermines the integrity of the election process, leading to the practice known as "voter trucking."

According to Section 10.1 (a) of the New Elections Law of 2014, trucking of voters is illegal, and it is malfeasance, punishable by a fine (US\$1,000-\$5,000) or imprisonment for not more than six (6) months or both. It is an offence to remove or to cause someone to register in an area in which they do not ordinarily reside. However, the law does not specify what actions constitute the trucking of voters. Additionally, the National Elections Commission has yet to define what constitutes trucking of voters. EISA engaged NEC's legal department on this matter and all parties agreed that a working definition is very difficult to apply in the field. Despite this, many people continue to travel in large groups from one location to another for voter registration, thus disenfranchising residents of those respective districts from electing a representative of their choice. The NEC also highlighted that the law does not specifically identify the primary offender as either the person being trucked or the instigator of a mass trucking effort who acts either for their own or a political candidate's benefit.

Party and Campaign Finance

In Liberia, Article 82 of the Constitution and Sections 7.1 to 7.4 of the Elections Law establish regulations for campaign financing that aim to promote transparency, accountability, and fairness in the electoral process. These regulations cover various aspects of campaign financing, including spending limits, disclosure of funding sources, and contribution restrictions. Their primary goal is to make electoral funding transparent and to hold candidates and political parties accountable for their financial activities during campaigns. This helps prevent corruption, bribery, and undue influence by wealthy individuals or organizations on the political process.

Spending limits are critical in preventing excessive and potentially unfair use of financial resources. By setting a cap on the amount of money that candidates and political parties can spend during campaigns, the regulations aim to level the playing field and prevent candidates with more significant financial resources from gaining an unfair advantage.

Requiring candidates and political parties to disclose their funding sources enhances transparency. This provision enables voters to understand where a candidate's financial support comes from and whether potential conflicts of interest exist. Such disclosure can help prevent the manipulation of the political process by undisclosed or hidden funding sources.

The regulations also prohibit foreign donations to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process from outside influence. By preventing foreign entities or individuals from contributing to campaigns, the regulations seek to ensure that the interests of the country's citizens remain at the forefront of the political landscape rather than being swayed by external forces. These regulations collectively contribute to the overall fairness of elections. By controlling campaign spending and enforcing transparency, candidates can compete on a more level playing field, and voters can make informed decisions based on their platforms rather than their financial resources.

Enforcing and overseeing the implementation of these regulations is crucial to their effectiveness. Robust mechanisms for monitoring and reporting violations must be in place to ensure that candidates and parties comply with spending limits and disclose their funding sources. If these regulations are effectively implemented, they could lead to a more inclusive and equitable political process. Candidates from a broader range of socioeconomic backgrounds could participate in elections, reducing the disproportionate influence of money in politics and potentially enhancing the representation of marginalized voices.

Election Dispute Resolution

Election dispute resolution is a crucial aspect of Liberia's democratic processes. Like many other democratic nations, Liberia has faced challenges in conducting free, fair, and transparent elections due to various factors such as allegations of fraud, irregularities in the voting process, issues with voter registration, and disagreements over election results. To maintain the integrity of the electoral process, the National Elections Commission (NEC) has established a legal framework for dispute resolution before the October 10, 2023, elections.

The NEC's Board of Commissioners adjudicates election-related disputes, such as candidate eligibility, voting irregularities, and election-related complaints. The NEC conducts hearings where parties involved in election disputes can present their case and provide evidence to support their claims.

The New Elections Law 2014 grants the Commission the authority to administer and enforce all election-related laws across Liberia, including the appointment of Election Magistrates as stipulated in Section 2.22. The Election Magistrates are essential to Liberia's electoral process. They act as the NEC's representatives and oversee all election activities, including judicial duties within their assigned districts and counties.

In addition, the Election Magistrates are authorized to hear and resolve objections to voter registration claims and disqualify voters on registration rolls. They can also order the reinstatement of names of qualified voters who were wrongly removed upon a proper showing.

They can hear and resolve election offences where the penalty does not exceed \$500.00 in the first instance.

Apart from the above, the Election Magistrates have significant authority. As per Section 4.4 of the New Elections Law, they are responsible for organizing the election and appointing a deputy or deputies, subject to the Commission's approval, to act specially or generally, or for a specific constituency, amongst other duties. Section 2.24, which allows Election Magistrates to report directly to the Board of Commissioners and serves as the link between the Board of Commissioners and the County to which they are assigned.

In cases where parties are dissatisfied with the NEC's decisions, they can appeal to the Supreme Court of Liberia, the country's highest judicial authority, and make the final determinations on election-related disputes. Once the Supreme Court has ruled on a matter, all legal routes for contesting a decision have been exhausted.

3.2 Electoral System

According to Article 77 (b) of the Liberian Constitution, any citizen of Liberia who is at least 18 years old at the time of registration has the right to register as a voter and participate in public elections and referenda. However, individuals who are legally incompetent, mentally unstable, or have lost their right to vote due to a conviction and have not regained their citizenship status are not permitted to vote.

In Liberia, elections are held every election year on the second Tuesday of October. As per Article 83(a) of the Constitution, citizens eligible to vote by law participate in the election to elect the President, Vice President, Senators and House of Representatives members. Accordingly, these elections must be carried out by secret ballot and administered by the Elections Commission.

According to Article 50 of the Liberian Constitution², registered voters shall elect the President and Vice President for a six-year term, with no possibility of the president serving more than two terms. The President serves in the function of Head of State, Head of Government, and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia according to Article 50³ of the Constitution. No person shall serve as President for more than two terms. Additionally, registered voters shall elect members of the Senate for nine years, while the House of Representatives members are elected for a six-year term in strict compliance with Articles 45 and 48, respectively.

² https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jW3ye4S5_AI1uDja8F_OtzVXX_rS_D9T/view

³ "The Executive Power of the Republic of Liberia shall be vested in the President who shall be Head of State, Head of Government, and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia. The President shall be elected by universal adult suffrage of registered voters in the Republic and shall hold office for a term of six years.

The issue of term limits for the President and Senators was a topic of discussion in Liberia in 2022. In March 2023, the Liberian legislature passed a bill aimed at amending various provisions of the Elections Law, including those related to term limits. One significant addition to the bill was the inclusion of a provision that would have imposed term limits on these positions. Additionally, the bill contained paragraphs that proposed the establishment of a new independent body responsible for addressing complaints related to election conduct, altering the election date and allowing Liberian diaspora members to vote if they possessed valid Liberian identification. Notably, the bill also introduced a requirement for political parties to adhere to a gender quota when creating candidate lists for elected offices. This provision aimed to enhance gender diversity and representation within the electoral process. However, despite its initial approval by the legislature, the bill was vetoed by the President. As a result of this disagreement, the bill did not become law, underscoring the complexities and challenges associated with electoral reforms and gender quotas in Liberia.

3.3 Election Management and Administration

The Constitution of Liberia establishes the National Elections Commission (NEC) in Article 89. The organization and administration of the NEC are detailed in Chapter 2 of the Elections Law. The NEC is an independent public commission composed of seven Commissioners appointed by the President of Liberia. The President assigns one of them as the Chairman and another as the Co-Chairman, with all appointments subject to the approval of the Senate (Section 2.1). To qualify as members of the Commission, individuals must be Liberian citizens and at least 35⁴ years old. Commissioners serve a seven-year term, and they can be removed from their positions in cases of proven misconduct. They should not belong to any political party⁵.

The legal framework provides the NEC with broad authority to oversee and manage the election process. This includes responsibilities such as voter registration, electoral district delineation, ballot paper design and distribution, approval and procurement of ballot boxes, the establishment of polling centres and stations, and accreditation of citizen and international observers, media, and party agents.

However, there have been challenges related to public and stakeholder trust in various stages of the pre-election process. Confidence in the NEC's ability to effectively manage electoral processes was impacted by delays in procuring BVR kits, and concerns about the integrity of certain members of the Board of Commissioners. The NEC's public communications strategy has at times been ineffective in conveying the intended messaging to the public and political stakeholders.

⁴ Section 2.3 of the New Elections Law

⁵ Section 2.2 of the New Elections Law.

Election magistrates are appointed to oversee the electoral process, polling stations, ballot distribution, and result tabulation. They play a critical role in maintaining order, ensuring compliance with electoral laws, and addressing any issues that may arise during the election. The election management process requires the coordinated efforts of various stakeholders, including the Civil Registrar, election magistrates, and temporary staff. The removal of incompetent election magistrates and temporary staff highlights the importance of upholding the integrity of the electoral system, as exemplified by the case of NEC temporary staff being removed for alleged failure to prevent underage registrants.

It is essential to ensure that individuals involved in the election management process adhere to the highest standards of competence, impartiality, and ethical conduct to maintain the credibility of democratic processes. The credibility of the electoral system depends on the coordinated efforts of all stakeholders to ensure transparent, fair, and credible elections. Liberian elections are in compliance with international law and human rights.

Liberia has signed and ratified some international and subregional protocols, thus committing itself to conduct national elections that uphold international best practices, protocols, laws, and human rights treaties. This dedication to democratic governance and the protection of human rights demonstrates Liberia's responsibility as a member of the global community.

Liberia adheres to a range of principles to ensure fairness and transparency in electoral processes, including universal suffrage, equal representation, and transparency. These international best practices ensure that the will of the people is reflected in the election results and peaceful power transitions can occur.

Liberia's participation in international protocols and treaties related to elections and human rights underscores its commitment to global norms. Following these protocols, Liberia respects fundamental rights established by international law, such as the right to vote and free expression. Through its membership in international human rights treaties, Liberia is obligated to protect and uphold the rights of its citizens. These rights are critical for fair elections and political participation.

Conducting national elections in line with international standards is essential for maintaining a stable democracy in Liberia. Fair elections contribute to the legitimacy of elected representatives, promote political inclusivity, and reduce the potential for conflicts arising from disputed electoral outcomes.

4. KEY FINDINGS ON THE PRE-ELECTION PHASE

4.1 Voter Registration

The NEC adopted the Biometric Voter Registration technology to register voters for the 2023 election as mandated by Section 5:2 of the 2023 General Elections Regulations. The introduction of BVR in 2023 represents a significant and proactive step taken by the NEC to address concerns related to multiple voting and voter manipulation and shortcomings of the previous Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) witnessed in previous elections. Biometrics, including facial recognition and fingerprint scanning, were used to prevent multiple registrations and fraud. However, the BVR implementation process faced several challenges and delays. For example, the procurement of the BVR supplier, Laxton Group, was delayed due to political disagreements surrounding the selection of the supplier. As a result, this delay had a cascading effect on the entire election calendar, resulting in the compression of the preparation schedule by approximately four months. In addition, challenges such as improper charging of BVR kits, inconsistent overnight storage procedures, and limited accessibility of BVR centres were noted. Some registrants faced difficulties in accessing BVR centres due to their remote locations, which particularly affected vulnerable groups like the elderly, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and pregnant women.

EIS-IEOM LTOs arrived in Monrovia on April 24, 2023, and extensively observed the voter registration process, covering 11 out of Liberia's 15 counties. They conducted interviews with key electoral stakeholders to gain insights into the successes and challenges of the BVR implementation. EISA released three observation reports covering observations made during phase one, and phase two of the BVR process and the comprehensive report covering the two phases⁶ and the deduplication exhibition and cleaning of the roll. This process led to the production of the Final Registration Roll (FRR) for the 2023 Presidential and Legislative Elections. The BVR process was executed in three phases, with Phase 1 covering six counties and Phase 2 covering the remaining nine counties. Phase 3 involved the exhibition of the voters' roll, allowing for objections and corrections. Splitting the voter registration process into phases provided NEC the opportunity to learn from phase one to improve the exercise for phase two, this is commendable.

⁶ EISA IEOM BVR Report Phase 2: EISA BVR Report for Phase 2: <https://www.eisa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2-EISA-IEOM-Report-No-2-Phase-2-Biometric-Voter-Registration-Process-16-May-2023.pdf>

EISA noted that a 2014 modification to the New Electoral Law obliges voters to register where they "ordinarily reside," an amendment aimed at preventing "trucking," or bringing voters from outside of a district or the country to register and vote in an area where they do not ordinarily inhabit. Section 5.2 of the Voters Registration Regulations 2022, which requires voters to register in their areas of ordinary residence, lacks a clear definition of "ordinarily resides." This leads to ambiguity in legal interpretation and potential conflicts with Article 80 (c) of the Liberian Constitution, which guarantees citizens the right to register and vote in their constituency. The lack of clarity in the election law concerning ordinary residency creates opportunities for individuals with ulterior motives to exploit the election process, resulting in what is referred to as "voter trucking." Section 10.1 (a) of the New Elections Law of 2014 deems voter trucking illegal and classifies it as malfeasance, punishable by a fine or imprisonment. However, the law lacks a specific definition of voter trucking, and the National Elections Commission (NEC) has not provided a clear definition either. Consequently, there are challenges in applying the law in the field. However, neither the law texts nor the NEC's Trainer Manual for Voter Registration define ordinary residence or give guidance on how registration officials ought to determine where a voter often lives. As a result of this legal uncertainty, the IEOM noted that during the 2023 pre-election period, the voter trucking matter garnered significant attention from various stakeholders including the media, citizen observer groups, political parties, and international development partners. Voter trucking considered a procedural offence, is generally perceived as detrimental to democracy in Liberia. It is viewed as suppressing local voices, distorting the voting process, and potentially leading to conflicts associated with election-related issues. Some stakeholders argue that these practices amount to the commercialization of Liberia's democracy, undermining the principles of electoral integrity, credibility, and the legitimate representation of citizens in the National Legislature.

During the deduplication, the NEC conducted a thorough deduplication process to identify and remove duplicate registrations and suspected underage registrants using biometric data. A total of 27,192 duplicates [including a total of 3,436 individuals who registered multiple times] and 529 suspected underage registrants were identified. NEC clarified that individuals who engaged in multiple registrations will be allowed to cast their vote only once, and that vote will be counted at the polling station where they completed their initial registration. The deduplication exercise was followed by the exhibition of the Provisional Registration Roll. The exhibition process allowed stakeholders to inspect the Provisional Registration Roll (PRR) for errors, omissions, and duplications.

Following the cleaning and correction of the provisional voter roll in accordance with the law, the NEC published the Final Registration Roll (FRR) with several voters for the 2023 elections at 2,471,617, an increase of 13.18 % compared to the 2017 registration roll of 2,183,629. This

indicated the level of efforts made by the NEC and its partners to mobilize Liberian men and women who equally expressed interest in participating in the ongoing electoral process (49.95% men and 50.05% women). Also, 12,399 Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) were registered. NEC conducted a voters' register audit cleaned the register of double and multiple registrations and deleted some names of identified minors from the register. About 27,000 records of multiple registrations were detected during the voter audit exercise and this involved 3,436 multiple registrants.

While there were logistical and technical challenges noted during the voter registration process, the preparation of the voters' roll was prepared using appropriate technologies and processes and was conducted transparently. EISA noted some limitations to the finalized voter roll, such as the use of non-current census data to allocate polling stations based on information for the past 20 years, and the restriction on persons 18 years of age on voting day, but not during registration. An incorrect assumption that the BVR devices will be used on election day to verify voters continues to circulate. On election day, the BVR kits will not be used to authenticate voters, who require their voter card and their name to be on the register.

The quality of the printed cards is of concern, as the ink used to mark them appears to be easily removed, rendering the cards unusable. Although a window period was provided for the replacement of lost and damaged cards from August 14 to 19, 2023, saw a very low turnout. Stakeholders attribute this to the absence of banks at the county level, transportation challenges, and poor road conditions.

EISA noted reports of voters handing over their voter cards to political parties for cash, on the understanding that they would be expected to vote as directed by the political party on election day.

During the BVR, political parties were accused of conducting 'pre-campaigning' with 3 parties, CDC, UP and CPP ultimately facing fines from the NEC. CPP has challenged this sanction arguing that they were conducting civic and voter education. The case has not been finalized

EISA-IEOM has received extensive reports indicating that some voters have been coerced into handing over their voter cards to political parties in exchange for financial incentives. These voters are under the impression that they will be expected to vote as directed by the political party on election day, raising concerns about the integrity of the electoral process.

Additionally, during the BVR process, some political parties were accused of engaging in 'pre-campaigning' activities. Three parties, namely CDC, UP, and CPP, faced fines from the NEC as a

result. It is noteworthy that CPP has contested this sanction, arguing that they were conducting civic and voter education, and this case remains unresolved.

EISA-IEOM commends the BVR for its potential to improve the credibility of the electoral process by preventing multiple registrations and fraud. BVR's effectiveness depends on supporting factors such as a functional civil registry, clear legislation, and procedures. This requires the support of other branches of the Liberian government through the promulgation of updated legislation, and the timely preparation of population data before an election to facilitate a new delimitation process.

4.2 Electoral district boundary delimitation

Electoral districts play a crucial role in ensuring equitable representation and the equal value of each vote in the legislative process. Article 39 of the Liberian Constitution states that the Legislature is mandated to ensure that a population census takes place every ten years. This census aims to provide a detailed and accurate representation of the country's demographic, social, and economic conditions. According to the Constitution, these districts must be contained within county boundaries and should ideally have a roughly equal population distribution, approximately 20,000⁷ citizens or as determined by the legislature based on census data accounting for population changes and migrations, provided that the total number of electoral constituencies in the Republic shall not exceed one hundred. It is essential to conduct a national census every ten years to guide the process of redrawing electoral boundaries.

A census exercise was conducted in December 2022, with provisional results published in February 2023. A new electoral district delimitation based on these provisional data before the 2023 elections did not take place before the 2023 elections. Without official final census results over the last ten years, the NEC will retain the previous electoral district boundaries rather than conduct a comprehensive redistricting exercise as required by law for the upcoming 2023 elections. The last delimitation of electoral districts was conducted in 2010 through a “Joint Resolution LEG-002 (2010)” of the Senate and House of Representatives of the 52nd Legislature. “The 52nd Legislature agreed that sixty-four (64) electoral districts set up by the NEC for the conduct of the 2005 Legislative elections continue to be used but for the 2011 Legislative Elections, nine (9) additional electoral districts are prescribed and established making a total of seventy-three (73) electoral districts in the Republic of Liberia, which was approved by the President of Liberia and published into handbill⁸.

⁷ Articles 80(d) and (e) of the Constitution,

⁸ Guidelines on the Establishment of Electoral Districts in Liberia for the 2011 Legislative Elections

The last National Population and Housing Census took place in 2008. EISA-IEOM noted that there is a consensus among many stakeholders consulted that new delimitation is a necessary exercise before the next elections. According to provisional results from the Liberian Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), the estimated population of Liberia stands at 5.2 million people according to the latest census conducted between November and December 2022. This figure represents a significant increase of 50.4 per cent when compared to the population recorded in the 2008 census, which was 3.5 million. In summary, Liberia's population has grown by more than 1.7 million people over 14 years⁹. The use of outdated data from the 2010 delimitation exercise by NEC or the 2023 elections does not ensure the equal value of each vote and goes against the principles of democratic representation.

4.3 Political Party Registration and Candidate Nomination

A total of 46 political parties are registered by the NEC for the upcoming 2023 general elections. The NEC designated the period from June 14th to July 14th, 2023, for interested parties to submit their nominations. Compared to previous nomination periods, the NEC extended the candidate registration period by an additional 08¹⁰ days. However, despite this extension, a majority of candidates chose to register during the final 2-3 days of the registration period. The IEOM observed a significant influx of aspirants occurred during the final days of the registration period, contrasting with the low turnout reported during the early period of the process.

At the end of the nomination process, a total of 1,030 candidates had submitted their nomination documents. This group includes 20 presidential candidates and 1,010 candidates competing for Senatorial and House of Representative seats. Among these candidates, 871 (approximately 85%) were male, while female candidates numbered only 159 (around 15%). It is worth noting that both political actors and the NEC had previously committed to fulfilling a minimum of 30% representation of women candidates in the 2023 elections. While some applicants faced rejection due to issues such as nationality and disputes over their domicile, the vast majority of applicants were confirmed as candidates. For those candidates who were not confirmed, legal avenues were available for them to contest and appeal the decision made by the NEC.

Regarding nomination fees, presidential candidates were required to pay a filing fee of two thousand five hundred United States Dollars (USD 2,500.00), while those competing for Senate seats had to pay seven hundred fifty United States Dollars (USD 750.00). Candidates seeking

⁹ <https://liberia.un.org/en/220493-liberia-announces-provisional-results-its-5th-national-population-and-housing-census>

¹⁰] <https://www.necliberia.org/others.php?&e49c7921cb156014099756961908d03f94e3584c=NzQ2> and <https://necliberia.org/elegal.php>

election to the House of Representative seats were required to pay five hundred United States Dollars (USD 500.00). In addition to these fees, political parties were expected to maintain a minimum balance of ten thousand United States Dollars (USD 10,000.00) in their accounts and provide tax clearance certificates as part of the documentation required for individuals to qualify as candidates in the elections. These financial requirements were in addition to the standard constitutional age and other qualification criteria.

The EISA mission has observed that the high filing fees mandated by the NEC, along with the uniform application of these fees without considering the financial constraints faced by women and other candidates, may have discouraged many women and youth from participating in the electoral process. The fees posed a significant barrier for potential candidates, making it difficult for them to cover the cost of filing. Additionally, the restrictions imposed by the 2022 Campaign Financing Regulations and the 1986 Constitution place the onus on political parties and candidates to secure their funding for campaign activities. The state does not offer financial support to political parties, and the Constitution prohibits political parties from receiving funds from external entities. This situation presents a substantial challenge to promoting inclusive political participation in Liberia, particularly in a context where a large portion of the population lives below the poverty line and the country is grappling with the broader economic impact of the global downturn.

Regarding observer access to the candidate nomination centres, EISA LTOs were not permitted to enter the area where registrants were undergoing the nomination process without an NEC official accompanying them. The guided tour provided by NEC officials explained the nomination steps. The rationale for this guided access was to ensure the privacy of candidates due to the involvement of sensitive personal and private documents. The role and access of observers during the nomination process are not explicitly defined in the Elections Law, which primarily addresses observer roles on voting day. EISA observed that the NEC had efficiently structured and organized the centre to facilitate a smooth process. Each election category, including President, Senate, and Representative, had predefined sets of required forms and documents available for political parties and independent aspirants to collect, complete, and return to the centre for nomination. EISA LTOs interacted with Political parties, candidates, the police, the media, and all stakeholders and were observed to have positively supported the process. However, some political parties expressed concerns about the challenges candidates faced in obtaining Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) clearance certificates, with delays lasting over two weeks in some cases.

The requirement imposed by the LRA for individuals to pay five years of taxes to obtain clearance for tax compliance was seen as a disadvantage to candidates. The NEC did not provide

clarity on why the LRA deviated from the legal requirement of only providing aspirants with proof of regular tax compliance. To address this issue in future electoral processes, the NEC could establish an "all-in-one centre" where all institutions involved in providing documents to election aspirants would be represented. This recommendation has been raised in previous elections.

Liberia has shown its commitment to providing women with equal opportunities to participate in political life alongside men by ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW¹¹). However, it's important to note that the current legal framework for elections in Liberia does not include provisions for quotas or other affirmative measures that would ensure women's representation in elected positions, as advocated by CEDAW¹². Therefore, there is a need for revisions to the electoral laws and regulations to align with international commitments and promote gender equality in political representation.

The candidate nomination period also offered an opportunity for political parties to support the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) calling for 30% representation of women within political party decision-making structures. However, the failure to sign into law the proposed amendments making the gender quota binding on political parties, as well as the failure of political parties to fulfil their commitments, has resulted in only 15% of all candidates fielded for the election being female. However, it is recommended that the MoU be further strengthened by making the gender quota legally binding on all political parties. The gender quota should be compulsory and not voluntary, supported by the Constitution and electoral laws.

EISA notes with concern that the collective performance of political parties to promote women's representation in political office remains far behind regional and international standards, with the trends suggesting that the disparity between men and women in political office is worsening rather than improving. This is an issue that requires urgent attention from a range of stakeholders to reverse the ongoing declines and help Liberia catch up with the regional and international standards on representation which it has adopted through its membership of ECOWAS, the AU and the United Nations.

¹¹ States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure women, on equal terms with men, the right (...) to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies." Article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

¹² Article 4.1 of CEDAW.

4.3. Civic and Voter Education

Voter education plays a crucial role in the electoral cycle as it ensures that citizens are well-informed and can exercise their voting rights effectively and without hindrance, thus upholding universal suffrage principles¹³. EISA-IEOM note that the NEC initiated civic voter education campaigns for different phase of the electoral process to date, deploying various media channels like print media, radio, the internet through its website and Facebook pages, and face-to-face interaction.

The CVE activities for the BVR process and the subsequent exhibition of the Provisional Voter Register (PRR) in Liberia were primarily carried out by accredited civil society organizations and various stakeholders, including media, political parties, and religious institutions. The NEC officially launched the CVE campaign for the 2023 electoral period on February 24, 2023. Duirn this period NEC adopted a CVE cell approach, collaborating with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) selected and approved by the NEC to conduct CVE in their respective communities. Through a competitive selection process, the NEC enlisted 400 CBOs, with a focus on women, youth, and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) groups, to undertake CVE activities across the country. Each electoral district was assigned one community-based organization, totaling 81 CVE cells covering Liberia's 73 districts. CVE activities aimed to raise awareness of the new biometric exercise, and similar efforts were carried out during both BVR phases.

However, EISA-IEOM noted a decline in CVE activities during the BVR process and the subsequent exhibition of the PRR. During the exhibition phase, LTOs reported reduced levels of CVE efforts in all observed counties. Only 20% of the exhibition centers visited between June 12-17, 2023, reported conducting CVE initiatives. This decline was considered a missed opportunity, as CVE agents had the right to conduct CVE activities according to the electoral calendar.

The NEC attributed this regression in CVE efforts during the exhibition to several challenges, including logistical issues that delayed the distribution of CVE materials from Monrovia. Additionally, financial constraints faced by the NEC had a negative impact on the CVE activities. It was reported that the NEC printed a total of 25,000 A2 posters to serve 81 cells nationwide during the exhibition phase.

The Mision is however concerned with a lack of a comprehensive civic and voter education strategy by NEC. EISA-IOM is of the view that civic and voter education should be designed to

¹³ U.N. ICCPR, Article 25(b);

reach the broadest possible audience using easily comprehensible methods, considering the low literacy rates in Liberia.

4.4 Civil Society Engagement and Election Observation

Civil society plays a critical role in ensuring support for institutional electoral processes as well as the development of democratic space in a country. Liberia's vibrant civil society sector plays a crucial role in the 2023 elections. Their involvement encompasses various activities, including voter education, process observation, advocacy for election law reform and candidate training. EISA IEOM noted that for a large part of the pre-election period, CSO observer networks contributed significantly to maintaining an engaged election environment.

According to NEC at least 300 CSOs and community-based organisations were accredited to carry out Civic and Voter Education [CVE] for BVR. Many of these organizations operated at the local or county level, tailoring their programs to cater to specific constituencies.

While civil society played crucial roles in CVE, training, peace promotion, and domestic observation, their involvement in electoral reform and monitoring was limited due to inadequate financial resources. Liberia has a large number of civil society organizations, many of which are concentrated around the capital, Monrovia. These organizations have faced challenges transitioning from a largely humanitarian funding landscape to a changing development context, despite being in a country with significant poverty levels.

Although civil society organizations have been actively involved in the pre-election electoral process, particularly in Civic and Voter Education and the release of regular observation updates, some CSOs expressed dissatisfaction with the NEC's communication, funding allocation for election-related programs notably during BVR, and the lack of a regular and institutionalized forum for two-way information exchange with the NEC. The NEC, on the other hand, recognized the importance of civil society as stakeholders and partners but expressed discomfort with feedback being primarily conveyed through press and radio statements rather than structured dialogue.

Two domestic observer groups, the Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC) and the Liberia Elections Observation Network (LEON), play substantial roles in monitoring the election process. These coalitions function as coordination platforms for civil society engagement in the electoral process. EISA -IEOM applauds the efforts of these groups in deploying long-term observers to monitor and evaluate critical aspects of the electoral process, including voter registration, the exhibition of the voter roll, candidate nominations, party primaries and ongoing campaigning.

The involvement of multiple Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), both at the national and international levels, played a crucial role in overseeing the voter registration process in Liberia. EISA-IEOM commends the collaborative effort and partnership that the ECC established with these CSOs during the observation period. In particular, the ECC and LEON formalized their partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which serves as a comprehensive framework document guiding their relationship. This collaborative approach demonstrates a commitment to transparency, accountability, and the promotion of free and fair elections in Liberia throughout the entire electoral cycle.

Additionally, other groups closely monitored the pre-election period. These included the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR), the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, and the Angie Brooks International Centre-Women's Situation Room (ABIC-WSR), with a particular focus on women's organizations. The Peace Building Office also participated in monitoring efforts, particularly election-related violence and conflict triggers.

The international community has deployed international observation missions to Liberia from 2005 up to the 2017 Liberia elections. In addition to EISA-IEOM the European Union (EU), and the African Union and ECOWAS, which also conducted mediation work, also deployed a pre-election assessment team in August 2023. The West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network (WADEMOS), a transnational civil society network conducted a pre-election solidarity mission to Liberia in August 2023 as an acknowledgement of the common democratic principles and existing cooperation among civil society and other civic actors in the West African sub-region. African Union, ECOWAS and WADEMOS missions issued pre-election assessment findings reports and provided constructive recommendations for Liberian stakeholders to consider as the election process unfolds.

4.5 Gender and Social Inclusion Issues

Article 11 of the Liberian Constitution guarantees equal rights for all citizens "irrespective of sex." The New Elections Law, as amended, also stipulates that political parties should strive for gender balance in their governing bodies and candidate lists, aiming for no less than 30% representation from each gender.

However, it's important to note that these provisions are more persuasive than mandatory, resulting in minimal impact on promoting greater women's participation. Despite Liberia's achievement of having Africa's first elected female president, the country has yet to attain equal gender representation in political life. For instance, there is no legal framework or regulation that supports equal representation of women in political processes and other decision-making positions.

EISA-IEOM acknowledges the initiatives taken by the NEC, along with the support of development partners and stakeholders such as UNDP and UNOMEN, to promote gender equality in Liberia through electoral law reforms. These efforts include proposing compulsory quotas for women in electoral processes. Furthermore, the Mission recognise the memorandum of understanding signed by political parties, committing to voluntarily field not less than thirty per cent (30%) women as candidates in the 2023 elections. However, these positive steps have not been fully realized in this election cycle. Notably, the proposed amendments to make the gender quota binding on political parties have not been signed into law, and political parties have not fully adhered to their commitments regarding gender quotas.

While the EISA commends the NEC for providing gender-disaggregated voter registration statistics and its commitment to ensuring gender balance in the recruitment of polling staff, it's noteworthy that women, who constitute 50.4% of registered voters, make up only 15% of approved candidates in these elections. Out of 31 political parties that participated in the nomination exercise, only the Liberia Transformation Party met the quota. And this is a relatively smaller party running fewer candidates. The Collaborating Political Parties are the only larger party, coalition, and/or alliance that came close to 30%. Major political parties still ended up with empty slots after almost two years of engagement on the 30% quota. Political parties have continually demonstrated that they do not have any interest in strengthening their internal democracy and promoting equal political participation. Additionally, the persistent trend of a declining proportion of women being included on the candidate rosters of political parties signals a lack of progress in this area.

Our consultations have revealed that women's political participation faces significant barriers that impede the emergence of female candidates in elections. One prominent obstacle is the requirement of a US\$100,000 'Indemnity Bond' for independent candidates and political parties. This financial burden can be highly discouraging, not only for independent candidates but also for women in general, especially considering that women constitute 50.4% of the currently registered voters. The fees for filing candidacy are significant and pose a challenge to women's equal participation in the political arena.

Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

Regarding accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in the electoral process, there are legal provisions in the New Elections Law (as amended) that require the NEC to make arrangements to make registration and voting centres/voting precincts accessible to PWDs and give them preference at these centres.

Section 3.2(b) of the elections law mandates that registration and polling officers prioritize persons with disabilities at registration centres. Moreover, the law requires the National Elections Commission (NEC) to make reasonable and practical efforts to ensure that registration and polling centres are accessible to persons with disabilities. It is illegal and constitutes malfeasance for any person to divulge any information concerning the vote of any voter or that obtained through assisting a person with disabilities.

During consultations with the National Union of Organizations for the Disabled (NOUD), it was noted that the voter registration process was not widely accessible to PWDs. While EISA IEOM noted that PWDs were given priority at registration centres, there were complaints that NEC communications did not cater to the needs of blind and deaf individuals. However, NOUD undertook awareness campaigns to advocate for improved accessibility for PWDs during the BVR and exhibition phases. PWDs have raised concerns about the accessibility of polling stations, especially those used during voter registration exercises, which some found difficult to access. They have also highlighted issues related to communication and civic education that excluded certain members, particularly the blind and the deaf. PWDs are calling for the NEC to develop inclusive communication and Civic and Voter Education (CVE) strategies that consider the diverse categories of PWDs.

Youth

The youth population in Liberia constitutes a significant majority, estimated at approximately 65 per cent¹⁴. This demographic reality, coupled with a substantial number of first-time voter registrants, has led to a focused advocacy effort targeting young people. Youth organizations and other stakeholders played a prominent role in advocating for peaceful and fair elections.

For instance, the Federation for Liberian Youth (FLY) has been actively engaged in issuing statements and calling for peace. They have urged all political actors to refrain from using inflammatory rhetoric and intensifying acrimony, instead emphasizing the importance of a peaceful, free, and fair electoral process. This advocacy centred around youth, has been instrumental in maintaining peace during the elections and promoting a positive vision for the youth demographic, according to stakeholders from organizations like NAYMOTE.

EISA-IEOM's observations revealed that youth are highly active in the election campaign. They turn out in large numbers at major political rallies and contribute significantly to the energy of the crowds, making their presence felt across various counties.

¹⁴ In Liberia the category of youth is defined as comprising persons between the age of 15 and 35 years.

During the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) exercise, EISA observers noticed that registration centres saw a strong representation of younger people. Moreover, young individuals were well-represented among the NEC Temporary staff, serving as registration officials. This participation underscores the youth's active involvement in the electoral process.

Despite the visible and significant role that youth play in the electoral process, their influence in decision-making remains somewhat limited. Efforts should be made to integrate the voices and priorities of young people into political platforms.

Minority Groups

Liberia is home to more than 16 distinct ethnic groups, each possessing its unique cultural heritage and traditional customs. Despite their significant population presence, ethnic minority communities have historically encountered challenges in achieving meaningful political representation, thus limiting their ability to influence policies directly affecting their societies. These challenges encompass:

a) Limited Access to Political Leadership: Ethnic minorities often encounter difficulties in gaining access to prominent political leadership roles, primarily due to a history of marginalization and inadequate representation within political parties.

b) Cultural Barriers: Traditional norms and practices may impose constraints on the political participation of ethnic minority women, thereby exacerbating gender disparities within these communities.

c) Insufficient Voter Education: Ethnic minority populations may face obstacles in accessing voter education initiatives, resulting in lower voter turnout and a limited understanding of their voting rights.

Liberia is a religiously diverse nation, with Christianity and Islam being the predominant religions. The 2022 census reveals that Muslims account for 12.2% of the population.¹⁵ Religious minorities, such as Muslims and adherents of indigenous beliefs, may face unique challenges in the electoral process such as discrimination and prejudice relating to their names and more thorough processes to prove their nationality. In 2017, the Carter Center reported that in Lofa, several Muslim women were prevented from registering and were accused of not being Liberians. In the same year in Lofa, Muslim women were prevented from voting when they refused to take off their headscarves¹⁶.

¹⁵ <https://countrymeters.info/en/Liberia#religion>

¹⁶ <https://frontpageafricaonline.com/politics/liberia-muslim-backed-party-with-vote-rich-appeal-looking-to-shock-in-presidential-elections/>

4.6 Media Environment

The media continues to play an essential role in linking electoral candidates to citizens, encouraging the cultivation of free speech and access to alternative opinions on the democratic dispensation is another pillar of genuinely democratic elections¹⁷. EISA EIOM noted that the media environment in Liberia is characterised by a mix of media freedom guaranteed by the Constitution and the AKA Act of 2019 on Media Freedom and Expression, but it also faces challenges related to access, coverage, and professionalism.

Radio is the primary source of information for most Liberians and television is the least used and developed. The internet gave rise to multiple forums of discussion and alternative sources of information during the elections. While a wider use of social media increased the public debate, it also offered a greater opportunity to disseminate misleading content and disinformation. However, the issue of community radio stations being owned by candidates, especially local incumbents, raises concerns about potential biases in reporting and programming as observed by the EISA-IEOM.

According to the media stakeholders, a significant proportion of media houses, 100 out of 165, are owned by politicians. This ownership dynamic influences the media's agenda-setting and information dissemination, elevating the risk of biased reporting. This has led to concerns about the quality of programs and media independence, as programming can be influenced by political interests. It's important that community radio stations adhere to ethical journalistic standards, provide equal opportunities for all candidates to communicate their messages, and avoid favouring specific individuals or parties.

Limited trust in state-owned media by the opposition, which affects their willingness to use these platforms to promote their political agendas has been observed. The legal mandate requiring state-owned media to allocate a significant portion of airtime to government programs also raises concerns about balance. This is linked to allegations of government influence through financial means to buy media outlets or favour certain political interests, which can disadvantage the opposition, whereas EISA IEOM is to substantiate these claims.

The impact of a financially constrained media economy, compounded by a politicized media landscape, was highlighted as a key factor that shapes media in Liberia. According to the stakeholders in the media sector, the need to generate revenue often leads media houses to self-censorship and alignment with the government or personal interests of sponsors to secure

¹⁷ ICCPR, Article 19.

business opportunities, thereby making them susceptible to manipulation. The effects of this on the electoral environment create an environment where journalists are often tempted to compromise their independence in favour of revenue-generating reporting.

Stakeholders raised concerns about the proliferation of hate speech and misinformation, particularly during the campaign period. The Liberian legal framework lacks specific provisions to address misinformation and hate speech, relying on defamation laws that may not adequately handle these issues. Both online and offline, misinformation was prevalent during the BVR exercise, with community radio stations inadvertently spreading false information corrected by the NEC. Instances of disinformation emerged during the official campaign period, fueled by a polarized political environment and politically-owned media outlets. Efforts to combat this include Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), fact-checking training, gender disinformation awareness, and hate speech training supported by USAID and organizations like Internews and ILab Liberia. With the upcoming election, addressing misinformation through fact-checking and legal clarity becomes crucial.

The gendered dimension of media and election coverage in Liberia is a complex issue characterized by historical under-representation and negative portrayal of women¹⁸. Key observations made by EISA-IEOM include:

Historical under-representation: Women have been historically underrepresented both as journalists and as subjects of media coverage. Factors contributing to this underrepresentation include gender stereotyping, imbalanced power in media ownership and management, and limited women's media strategies.

Media Coverage of Women in Politics: Women in politics receive less media coverage and publicity compared to their male counterparts. They also often experience negative media coverage, which can deter their active participation in political spaces.

Gender Stereotyping: The media landscape in Liberia is influenced by traditional and cultural norms, resulting in gender stereotyping and the underrepresentation of women's viewpoints. Women in politics may face criticism that focuses on their appearance and adherence to traditional gender roles.

Power Imbalance: Male ownership and management dominate media houses, including privately owned outlets. This power imbalance extends to newsroom leadership, with fewer female journalists and less influence for women media personalities.

¹⁸ Findings from the 2022 Afrobarometer also highlighted the challenges that female political aspirants face from their family, as more than half of respondents think women aspirants will probably face problems with their families. <https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/News-release-Liberians-strongly-endorse-womens-political-leadership-Afrobarometer-ma-gw-bh-2june23.pdf>

Additionally, many media houses are owned by male politicians, which provides a further advantage to male candidates where this is the case. With very few media platforms owned by women and the ownership of a platform often used for partisan advancement, this indicates an additional challenge facing women in the media space. These challenges related to gender and media coverage underscore the need for efforts to promote gender equity and balanced representation in both media leadership and political spaces in Liberia.

4.7 Campaign Financing

Political party and campaign finance in Liberia is regulated by Article 82 of the Liberia Constitution, Chapter 7 of the New Elections Act (as amended), and the 2023 Campaign Finance Regulations. This regulatory framework specifies the permissible sources of funding, mandates the disclosure of donations and expenditures by parties and the NEC, and imposes limits on campaign expenditures and contributions. The guidelines provide clear descriptions to political parties and candidates of the NEC's reporting and monitoring procedures. However, the framework does not provide for public financing of political parties.

The constitution and the New Elections Law of 1986 (as amended) permit political parties and campaigns to be financed by private contributions from within the country and the diaspora. It prohibits contributions from anonymous sources, foreign individuals or institutions, business organizations, and labour unions.

Parties and candidates are required to appoint a campaign treasurer responsible for keeping track of all contributions and expenditures. Parties and candidates are required to submit a statement of assets and liabilities alongside their nomination documents. Parties and candidates are required to submit an audited account and assets and liabilities report to the NEC within fifteen days of the announcement of the final election results. The NEC is obligated to publish such reports. Article 83 of the Liberia Constitution requires parties to submit a yearly financial report to the NEC.

The NEC has limited capacity to monitor campaign finance spending. As part of the framework for enforcing the campaign finance regulations, the NEC has collaborated with Integrity Watch Liberia, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), under a project called "Strengthening Accountability and Compliance in Campaign Finance Frameworks for the 2023 Elections" project. This initiative is aimed at enhancing compliance and enforcement of campaign finance regulations. Parties and candidates who violate campaign finance regulations could face fines of up to USD 5,000.

The New Elections Law limits individual contributions to a maximum of USD 100,000. In addition, it stipulates the following campaign expenditure limits:

- Two million dollars US dollars for presidential candidates
- USD 600,000 for vice presidential candidates
- \$600,000 USD for senator
- Representative compensation – USD 400,000

Except for individuals on official duty, the framework prohibits the use of public funds for political campaigns. The EISA-IEOM observed noncompliance with this provision during the campaigns, for example, the use of state resources such as vehicles with government plate numbers which transported officials and party supporters. No action has been taken to sanction infringing candidates/ parties at this time.

4.8 Campaign Conduct

A genuinely democratic election, characterized by inclusivity and transparency, necessitates a conducive environment for campaigning where fundamental rights such as freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of movement, security of the person, and access to information are upheld and respected by all stakeholders involved in the election process¹⁹.

The official campaign period for the 2023 elections in Liberia commenced on 05 August 2023 and will conclude on October 8 2023. During the first week of the official political campaign leading up to the elections, the EISA-IEOM observed instances of inflammatory actions and electoral violence in Liberia. Supporters of the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) paraded through the streets of Monrovia carrying a casket with images of the opposition Unity Party's standard bearer, which was widely condemned by the CSO groups, NEC, CDC's campaign team, and international development partners. Additionally, in Montserrado County's electoral district 09, clashes between CDC and UP supporters resulted in injuries to four individuals on 10 August 2023. The public called on the Liberia National Police (LNP) to investigate the incident promptly and objectively, but there has been no public report on the LNP's actions in this matter.

So far, campaign activities have been conducted in a civil and orderly manner, with no significant restrictions reported. Notably, large political parties have organized major rallies in Monrovia, including the opposition CDC on 07 September 2023 and that of the Unity Party on 12 September 2023. These two huge rallies witnessed limited confrontations and tensions with the atmosphere observed to be relatively relaxed and celebratory. However, the use of hate speech

¹⁹ ICCPR, Articles 9, 12, 19, and 22

has been reported, for example, instances of profane, inflammatory, and hateful language used by political party supporters, with some directed at women candidates. Such language was observed at rallies and on various media platforms.

House of Representative candidates and county-level political party officials have predominantly favoured door-to-door campaigning, along with small groups of 'foot soldiers', 'battle criers' and 'rescue teams' reaching out to voters in some districts. Campaign activities, in general, appear modest, particularly outside Monrovia, which may be due to limited funding for party activities. Participants have reported that their rights to freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of association, and freedom of movement have been respected without hindrance.

However, concerns have been raised regarding the influence of local government officials, including traditional chiefs, in the electoral process and their potential to limit access to voters during campaigns. Tensions, violent clashes, and isolated incidents of loss of life have occurred during the campaign season. For instance, the CDC's public display of a coffin resembling UP Standard Bearer Joseph Boakai was criticized as provocative and intimidating, although President Weah called for restraint in response to the criticism. Linked to this observation, is the influence of Traditional and Religious Leaders. There were reports of traditional and religious leaders using their influence to publicly support specific candidates or political parties, with instances reported in multiple counties.

Campaign messaging during the election season has been highly personalized, characterized by charismatic appeals and a focus on voter mobilization and recruitment rather than substantive policy discussions. There is little evidence of comprehensive political agendas or manifestos outlining policy proposals being articulated on the campaign trail.

The misuse of state resources has been a recurring concern raised by opposition candidates in the pre-election period. Allegations include the misuse of government vehicles, fuel, state officials campaigning as party agents without resigning from their government positions and unequal access to public billboard space for campaign purposes and destruction of campaign posters highlighting inequalities in the election playing field. Specifically, there were limited reports of CDC candidates in Grand Kru and Nimba Counties using official government vehicles for campaign purposes.

Regional good practice guidelines emphasize that administrative resources, including vehicles, fuel, and meeting spaces, should not be abused to support any specific party or candidate. Article 5(c) of the Liberian constitution also calls for the elimination of "such abuses of power as

the misuse of government resources." Ensuring that state resources are not misused for political advantage is essential for maintaining a fair and level playing field in elections. Furthermore, EISA-IEOM has witnessed the use of state resources, such as government vehicles, to transport supporters to and from rallies organized by the ruling party. This includes public transport buses, and allegations suggest that these services were provided without payment. The misuse of incumbency and state resources can impact the fairness of the electoral process by providing an advantage to the ruling party.

Some political parties have been conducting recruitment campaigns wherein party activists collect voter registration information and cards from potential supporters. While the election law has not addressed this practice, it has the potential to create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation among voters. EISA observers have also received reports of such voter registration information being collected during the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) period. The intentional collecting of this information, when combined with innovations in the registration process such as the online pre-registration portal has fostered suspicions that this information will be used to disenfranchise voters. This highlights the need for vigilance and transparency in political activities to ensure that voters can freely exercise their rights without intimidation or undue influence.

During their observations, LTOs also directly observed the distribution of money, clothing and gifts at a rally organised by the ruling party, where money was distributed indiscriminately. Some Liberians accept such handouts while professing support for a different party, leading to concerns about "double agents."The use of money in politics can have a significant influence on mobilizing and recruiting voters, potentially tilting the playing field and affecting the overall integrity of the electoral process.

Although concerns about election-related violence sparking a civil conflict are currently moderate in likelihood, it's noteworthy that this is Liberia's first election since the civil war without international peacekeeping support. The capacity of the Liberian National Police (LNP) is limited, and some parties distrust the police for their safety, which has led to the use of supporter groups for candidate security.

Political parties at the county level have been delaying the submission of their campaign schedules to the NEC magisterial offices, increasing the risk of clashes between parties due to simultaneous campaigning. These incidents are being closely monitored as potential conflict triggers. Related to this is the observation that most political parties, particularly small parties are trying to delay the launch of their campaigns closer to election day to save resources and engage the electorate when it counts the most. The incumbency advantage is also a factor.

Newly certified political parties, in particular, face challenges due to the lack of public funding for political parties. These parties require support in fundraising and understanding the provisions of the elections law and regulations governing the electoral process. It is important to note that contributions to election expenses should be accepted only from Liberian citizens, in accordance with the Law.

EISA-IEOM welcomes candidate debates organised by Internews as a sign of the maturation and increasing sophistication of Liberian democracy. They provide an important source of information for voters, a forum for freedom of expression and for the test of ideas that is central to the democratic process

Overall, while campaigning in Liberia has been relatively peaceful and orderly, there are still concerns about potential conflict triggers, the influence of local officials, and the need for a level playing field in the electoral process. The campaign season emphasizes personal connections and entertainment value over substantive policy discussions

4.9 Security

In the context of election security for the 2023 elections in Liberia, it's noteworthy that the Liberia National Police (LNP) will have the sole responsibility for managing security, marking a significant shift. Previously, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) played a crucial role in ensuring security during elections, deploying approximately 17,000 security personnel. However, UNMIL officially exited Liberia in 2018, and the responsibility for election security now rests solely with the LNP. The LNP currently consists of 4,472 personnel, comprising 3,616 males and 856 females. Despite their efforts, this represents a significant personnel gap, especially when considering the magnitude of the 2023 elections. Even when additional personnel through the Joint Security are being considered, challenges persist related to resources and logistics including a lack of essential resources for crowd control, non-lethal weapons, vehicles, uniforms, and other necessary equipment. These limitations pose challenges to ensuring proper and effective policing to safeguard both people and property during the electoral process.

EISA-IEOM notes that the security situation in Liberia, as described by various stakeholders, highlights significant challenges that need to be addressed to ensure a peaceful election. Some key points and concerns include:

Security and Lawlessness: The prevailing sense of lawlessness and insecurity in Liberia is a cause for concern. This includes issues like rising crime rates, drug-related problems, and violence. These issues pose a threat to the country's stability.

Youth and Vulnerability: The situation has left many Liberian youths without opportunities for employment or skills development. This demographic is considered a potential source of unrest if their concerns and grievances are not addressed.

Rehabilitation and Reconciliation: There is a perceived lack of concrete commitments to national reconciliation and rehabilitation efforts. This lack of progress in healing post-conflict wounds may contribute to ongoing tensions.

Misuse of State Resources: There are allegations of the ruling party misusing administrative resources for campaign purposes, which raises questions about the fairness of the electoral process.

Security Capacity: Concerns have been raised about the capacity of the Liberia National Police (LNP) to provide adequate security during the elections, given the challenges they face in terms of resources, uniforms, and identification. There are also allegations of bias in favour of the ruling party.

Conflict Hotspots: Certain areas in Liberia are identified as conflict hotspots, where election-related tensions are expected to be high. Adequate security measures and planning are needed to prevent and address potential conflicts in these areas.

Addressing these concerns and challenges is essential to ensuring a peaceful and democratic electoral process in Liberia. It requires a coordinated effort from various stakeholders, including government institutions, political parties, civil society, and international partners, to promote security, fairness, and transparency in the upcoming elections. EISA IEOM has noted efforts through the Joint Security Taskforce. This should be augmented with training of police on their role during elections, cascaded down to the country levels. The police must also be provided with sufficient and necessary logical supplies including communication equipment, and sufficient transportation to effectively perform their responsibilities.

4.10 NEC State of Preparedness

The NEC has made progress on major electoral timelines such as voter registration, the exhibition of the temporary voter register, auditing of the voter register, conducting a de-duplication exercise to identify multiple registrations, and receiving candidates' nominations, among others. However, there was a delay regarding the launch of the Civic and Voter Education (CVE) for the election.

The delay has been largely attributed to financial constraints which impacted the NEC's budgets, under-resourcing the CVE component of NEC's programs. According to NEC, the government has approved a total budget exceeding USD 53 million to the NEC out of the over USD 90 million it initially requested. To date, the government has disbursed more than USD 49 million, leaving an outstanding amount of approximately USD 4 million yet to be released. Nevertheless, the

NEC has already acquired most of the electoral materials, particularly those imported from abroad. They have also assured the Mission that their technical and IT personnel are fully prepared for the upcoming elections. In addition to this, ECOWAS has provided support to the NEC amounting to USD 500,000, primarily directed towards technical assistance and logistical support.

Furthermore, the Liberia Elections Support Project (LESP), funded by a consortium of donor partners, focuses on CVE and raising awareness. Democracy International's Elections and Democracy Activity (EDA), funded by USAID, has been playing a significant role in supporting the institutionalization of civic education. It also aims to enhance the capacity of the NEC and civil society organizations in effectively managing electoral cycles. Despite these challenges, NEC and stakeholders at the community level are continuing with CVE efforts. Regrettably, systematic CVE activities in the counties however remain at low levels. There are several challenges and issues that the NEC has been facing. These include:

Low Citizen Trust: There is a significant lack of trust among citizens in the BVR (Biometric Voter Registration) technology and the electoral process in general. This low trust is partly due to political misconceptions and affiliation profiling of NEC Commissioners.

Communication and civic education: The NEC has not been effective in communication and public education efforts related to the electoral process. Many stakeholders have noted that the high number of people who conducted multiple registrations during voter registration was due to a lack of understanding of the process and its implications. Proper civic education was lacking, and many individuals were unaware that registering more than once was a crime in Liberia.

Multiple Registrations: The NEC flagged voters who submitted multiple voter registrations using biometric automated and manual verification processes. About 27,000 records of multiple registrations were detected during the provisional voter deduplication exercise and this involved 3,436 multiple registrants. This further highlights the need for civic education.

The NEC has informed stakeholders that it has procured the necessary election materials and is ready to deliver on its mandate. The NEC also mentioned the technical support from AU as well as financial, logistics and technical support of ECOWAS in this regard. The Commission was preparing to finalize the voters' register and provide copies to political parties and candidates.

The NEC initiated the recruitment of temporary polling staff, with a preference for previous staff where possible. The portal for the recruitment of polling officers was opened to the public on 31 July 2023 and ended on 7 August 2023. The NEC applications were sent to a central repository that then sends the application to the respective counties and districts.

The Inter-Party Consultative Committee (IPCC) meetings presided over by the NEC with political parties have also played a positive role in fostering dialogue and consensus-building between political parties and the NEC during the pre-election period and in past elections the Mission has noted. These meetings have served as forums for political parties to engage with the NEC and address various electoral issues. However, there have been challenges related to the timing of these meetings, with insufficient prior notice leading to the absence of high-ranking party leaders, which, in turn, impacted the efficiency of decision-making processes. Despite these challenges, sustained engagement in the forum between the two rounds of the presidential election allowed for continuous mediation and dialogue.

A total of 5,911 polling places and 2,080 voting precincts have been established nationwide in 73 electoral districts for the elections²⁰. Voting will start at 8:00 a.m., and end at 6:00 a.m. on 10th October, 2023. By law, the NEC has up to 15 days to declare the presidential results (but has 2 to 4 additional days if there are challenges in tabulating the results).

The NEC is actively collaborating with the Liberian National Police (LNP) to sensitize election candidates about campaign schedule submission procedures and the roles of the LNP and NEC during the campaign season.

4.11 Recommendations

Based on the deployment of the EISA-IEOM since January 2023, and the deployment of field observation since April 2023, the mission makes the following recommendations for the improvement and protection of democratic elections in Liberia, drawing lessons from the pre-election period of the 2023 Presidential and Legislative elections.

To the NEC

- Expand its civic voter education campaign, not only focusing on election rules but also informing voters that there will be no biometric verification on election day, and voting will be conducted as in previous elections.
- Improve its communication strategy when engaging with election stakeholders, emphasising key processes and clarifying election regulations.
- A manual on collation and tabulation of results should be produced promptly to allow election stakeholders sufficient time to familiarize themselves with the manual.

²⁰ <https://www.necliberia.org/> accessed on 02 October 2023

- The NEC should increase its engagement with political parties on important issues to mitigate perceptions of impartiality and ensure a more transparent electoral process.
- While the Farmington Declaration is not legally binding, those who breach it should face sanctions by the NEC, in line with relevant electoral laws.

To Political parties

- To ensure their representatives and agents are well trained to effectively follow through all the procedural processes at registration and polling stations.
- To take all possible steps to ensure that women are active in their political party structures as leaders and as party agents.
- Commit to the principles of the Farmington River Declaration and take a leading role as advocates for peace at all societal levels.
- Promote messages emphasizing the importance of peaceful elections, hold each other accountable for using inflammatory language, and discourage divisive behaviour.

To Liberia National Police

- Security agencies must respond to emerging threats and prosecute perpetrators of election violence to deter such incidents.
- Review strategies for election security, especially in the absence of the UN Mission in Liberia.
- Communicate and share information on security arrangements for the election to assure the security of the polls and build voter confidence.
- Condemn violent incidents during the campaign and maintain the integrity of the elections.

To the Media

- Media organizations and partners should prioritize professional training, especially in conflict-sensitive and election reporting, to reduce tensions and violence.

- Passage of the Independent Media Commission Bill is recommended for media regulation.
- Use media platforms to promote peace, dialogue, and voter education leading up to October 10, 2023.
- Disseminating the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Media and the media should prepare for managing sensitive communications during and after the elections.

To Government

- To guarantee that NEC has enough funding to complete the electoral process and effectively deliver on its Constitutional mandate.
- The legislature should prioritize the passage of legislation that will genuinely ensure equal political participation, structural barriers to women's political participation need to be removed.

To Civil Society organisations

- Close collaboration among civil society organizations prioritise electoral reform recommendations and actively advocate for their implementation, leveraging collective influence to enhance transparency and fairness in elections.

4.12 Conclusion

EISA's pre-election assessment of Liberia's electoral process highlights both the progress made in sustaining democracy over the past two decades and the complexities faced in the lead-up to the 2023 Presidential and Legislative elections. Liberia's constitutional and legal framework lays a solid foundation for credible elections, but the non-implementation of critical constitutional reforms raises concerns, especially regarding term lengths, gender quotas, and electoral magistrates' rotation.

The 2023 election context is marked by challenges, including the scaling back of international support, economic difficulties, and trust issues related to the administration of the elections by the NEC and state institutions. The EISA-IEOM underscores critical areas of concern, such as voter trucking and campaign finance regulations, emphasizing the need for clarity and enforcement. Election dispute resolution mechanisms are in place, but their effectiveness hinges on implementation. During political campaigning, isolated incidents of violence and

intimidation sparked concerns about Liberia's security capacity and the security arrangements in place for the elections. Last minute legal challenges to the NEC's conduct are still to be resolved, creating some confusion about the final days of preparation before the election.

Notwithstanding the challenges which have impacted the pre-election, in the assessment of the EISA-IEOM, Liberia has undertaken sufficient preparations for the 2023 elections as of the time of publication of this report to be able to deliver democratic and peaceful elections. This relies on all stakeholders to abide by the rule of law, promote peaceful activities, and support the pursuit of peaceful resolution of disputes. It does not presume to predict the outcomes of the 2023 elections, their legality or acceptability in the eyes of Liberians, but at a technical level, reflects EISA's assessment that within the constraints facing the country, election preparations were conducted in a manner that allows for a satisfactory electoral process.

To ensure the success of the 2023 elections and Liberia's democratic consolidation, all stakeholders must collaborate to address the challenges identified in this report, as well as the other international and domestic observation groups findings. EISA remains committed to supporting Liberia's democratic journey and the broader goal of a peaceful African continent characterized by democratic governance, human rights, and citizen engagement.

About EISA

EISA has since its inception in July 1996 established itself as a leading institution and influential player dealing with elections and democracy-related issues in the African continent. It envisions an African continent where democratic governance, human rights and citizen participation are upheld in a peaceful environment. The Institute's vision is executed by striving for excellence in the promotion of credible elections, citizen participation, and the strengthening of political institutions for sustainable democracy in Africa. Having supported and/or observed over 120 electoral processes in Africa, EISA has extensive experience in formulating, structuring and implementing democratic and electoral initiatives.

It has built an internationally recognised centre for policy, research and information and provides this service to electoral management bodies, political parties and civil society organisations in a variety of areas, such as voter and civic education and electoral assistance and observation. Besides its expanded geographical scope, the Institute has, for the past several years, been increasingly working in new in-between election areas along the electoral and parliamentary cycle, including constitution and law-making processes, legislative strengthening, conflict management and transformation, political party development, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and local governance and decentralisation.

EISA assists inter-governmental institutions like the African Union and Regional Economic Communities to reinforce their capacity in the elections and democracy field, having signed an MoU with many of these institutions. Within the framework of these signed memoranda, the Institute assists these intergovernmental institutions.

With offices in Johannesburg (South Africa) and Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), EISA has had field offices across the African continent and currently has offices in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Niger, Liberia, Chad and Sudan, and a regional liaison office at the secretariat of the ECCAS in Libreville, Gabon.

Election observation activities Since its inception EISA has deployed continental observation missions including missions, notably to Angola (2008), Botswana (1999, 2004, 2009), Central African Republic (2010, 2011), Côte d'Ivoire (202) Democratic Republic of Congo (2005 referendum, 2006 elections), Egypt (2011, 2012, 2014), Ghana (2008, 2012), Guinea Conakry (2010), Lesotho (1998, 2002, 2007, 2012, 2015), Liberia (2011), Madagascar (2005, 2007, 2013), Malawi (1999, 2004, 2009), Mauritius(2000, 2005, 2010, 2014), Mozambique (1999, 2004, 2009, 2013, 2014, 2019), Namibia (1999, 2004, 2009), Senegal (2012), Seychelles(2011), South Africa (1999, 2004, 2009, 2014), Tanzania (2005, 2010, 2020), The Gambia (2021) Uganda (2011), Zanzibar (2005, 2010), Zambia (2005, 2008, 2011,2015, 2020), and Zimbabwe (2000, 2002, 2008), Reports on these missions can also be found on our ebsite.

About USAID Support to EISA-IEOM to Liberia:

The USAID-funded EISA International Election Observation Mission (EISA-IEOM) Activity seeks to enhance the integrity of the 2023 Liberia Presidential and Legislative elections through the deployment of an independent international election observer mission (EOM) to monitor, assess and report on all phases of the electoral process in accordance with international and regional benchmarks. The IEOM is implemented in close coordination with and the financial support of USAID/Liberia and will complement the efforts of other electoral stakeholders. EISA-IEOM has deployed international LTOs across Liberia to observe BVR Phase 2 of the registration and will compile a Phase 2 and comprehensive BVR report after the inspection process.

For all resources, including EISA statements and reports from the 2017 Liberia Elections
<https://eisa.org/epp-liberia.php>

STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED

Lofa

	Political Parties & Independent Candidates	Stakeholders/ Government Institutions	Media Institutions
	Movement for Progressive Change (MPC)	Internews- USAID Liberia Media Activity	Liberian Press Union
	Movement for One Liberia (MOL)	NEC Magistrate Upper Lofa	The New Dawn
	New Liberia Party (NLP)	NEC Magistrate - Lower Lofa	Prime FM
	People's Unification Party (PUP)	Deputy NEC Magistrate-Upper Lofa	ELBC
	Rainbow Alliance (DJP, TWP & VCP)	LEON	BOSS Media
	Grassroot Democratic Party of Liberia (GDPL)	ECC	Female Journalists Association of Liberia (FeJAL)
	Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC)	National Youth Connection	
	Collaborating Political Parties (CPP)		
	Unity Party		
	ANC - Secretary General, Upper Lofa		
	Unity Party – Youth Leader		
	Independent Candidate – Momo Cyrus		
	Independent Representative Candidate Lofa County, District 3 – Una Kumba Thomson		
	MOL Candidate, Lofa County, District 3 – Pendorah C.W. Zayzay		
	Independent Representative Candidate Lofa County, District 4 – Marzu Boakai		
	UP, Secretary General, Lofa County		
	Independent Representative Candidate Lofa County, District 4 – Ma Massa Kamara		
	Independent Representative Candidate Lofa County, District 3 – Sangai Elizabeth Moses		
	Independent Representative Candidate Lofa County, District 4 – Mariamu Fofana		
	Independent Senatorial Candidate Lofa County – Moses Y. Kollie		
	Independent Representative Candidate Lofa County, District 3 – Momo Siafa Kpoto		
	All Liberia Coalition Party (ALCOP)		
	CDC Lofa County Office		
	Independent Senatorial Candidate Lofa County – Momo Cyrus		

Nimba, Bong & Margibi

	Political Parties	Stakeholders	Media Institutions
	All Liberians Solidarity Party (ALSOP)	LEON	Female Journalist of Liberia
	United Independent Democrats (UID)	NEC	

	National Development Party (NDP)	Internews	
	Liberia First Movement	NEC - Deputy Magistrate (Upper Nimba)	
	The Peoples Party	NEC - Deputy Magistrate (Lower Nimba)	
	Liberia for Prosperity	Office of the Superintendent - Nimba	
	Unity Party - Nimba Office	LNP - Sanniquele	
	CDC – Nimba Office	LNP - Bong	
	Magdalena Harris Independent Senatorial candidate – Grand Bassa	ECC Observer - Bong	
	Julia Duncan Casset Independent Senatorial candidate – Grand Bassa	CBO Youth Caucus	
		Deputy Magistrate – Grand Bassa	

Grand Bassa & Rivercess

	Political Parties	Stakeholders/ Gov't Institution	Media Institutions
	Movement for Democratic Reconstruction (MDR),	NEC – Nomination Center	Prime Media
	Vision for Liberia Transformation (VOLT)	Innovative Lab Liberia	
	National Democratic Coalition (NDC)	NEC - Engagement with aspirants	
	All Liberian Party (ALP)	NEC Magistrate – Grand Bassa	
	Unity Party (UP)	Traditional Council - Zone leader or Chief (Grand Bassa)	
	Democratic People's Party of Liberia (DPPL)	Traditional Council - Chairman of Zonal Council (Grand Bassa)	
	Liberians for Prosperity Party (LFPP)	Traditional Council Chairman of Governor's Council (Grand Bassa)	
	Liberia People Democratic Party (LPDP)	Police Commander – Grand Bassa	
	Liberian People Party (LPP)	NEC -Rivercess	
	Reformers National Congress (RNC)	Christian Association of Blinds (CAB	
	Greater Action Party of Liberia (GAPL)	CSO Initiative for Empowerment and Growth Africa (IEGA)	
	African Liberation League (ALL)	Congress for Women Development Initiative (COWODI)	
	Economic Freedom Fighters Liberia (EFF)	Election Coordinating Committee (ECC), River Cess	
	Unity Party - Rivercess	NEC Magistrate – Rivercess	
	Christine – Independent Candidate for District 5	Liberia Elections Observation Network - LEON	

Grand Gedeh

	Political Parties	Stakeholders/ Gov't Institutions	Media Institutions
	CDC Party Chairman – Grand Gedeh	Deputy Commander Zwedru H.Q	Smile Community Radio
	Unity Party - General Secretary	Chief of small arms – Zwedru	Voice of Gedeh Radio
	Rep. Madison Gwion Sr- Representative Candidate District 1	NEC -Supply Office and Logistics Officer/ Zwedru	Flash Radio Voice of Konobo Radio
	PLP – Grand Gedeh	Immigration County Commander	Liberian Broadcasting Cooperation and Liberian National Television
	People Unification Party (PUP)	Deputy County Commander for Operations	Peace Community Radio
		Commander Border Patrol Unit	
		Traditional Council – Executives	
		LEON Observer	
		CSO- Women and Children Empowerment Initiative	

		Liberia National Police –Konobo District 2	
		Ziah Town Magistrate Court – Konobo District 2	
		(LEON)- District 2	
		LNP – Toe Town	
		District Commissioner – Bhai District	

Montserrat, Bomi & Cape Mount

	Political Parties	Stakeholders/ Gov't Institutions	Media Institutions
	UID Cape Mount	NEC – Montserrado Magistrate	Radio Piso Cape Mount
	Unity Party	LNP – Zone Six Police Station	Radio Bomi
	Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC)	NEC – Asst. Magistrate Montserrado	ECOWAS Radio
	Sen. Darios Dillon	LNP Station at District 10 - Inspector	Network of Women Groups / Radio Cape Mount
	African Liberian League (ALL)	NEC - Director CVE	Voice of Jubilee
	LPDP	NEC Cape Mount Magistrate	
	NPP	Immigration Service Cape Mount	
	ANC	LNP Cape Mount	
	LPP	LEON – District 9 Youth Department	
	MPC Montserrado	National Civil Society Council of Liberia (NCSC)	
	National Democratic Coalition (NDC) Montserrado	Gonet Academy	
		NEC - Bomi	
		LNP - Bomi	
		Paramount Chief Garwula District/Cape Mount	
		Foundation For Youth Tranquillity (CSO)	
		UNDP	
		Liberia Fellowship of Full Gospel	
		LDEA Upper Montserrado	
		LIS - Bomi	

Maryland & Rivergee

	Political Parties	Stakeholders/ Gov't Institutions	Media Institutions
	Office of the Hon. Eric Wleh Giko, Maryland District 1	LEON Long Term Observer, Maryland, District 1	Phoenix Radio Maryland, District 1
	Unity Party	Harper Police Headquarters, Maryland, District 1	Voice of Truth, Maryland, District 2
	Liberia Restoration Party (LRP)	Karloken Police Detachment, Marland, District 3	Voice of Hope, Maryland, District 2

		Fishtown Police Depot, River Gee, District 1	Voice of Pleebo, Maryland, District 2
		Police Headquarters, Maryland, District 2	City FM Radio, Pleebo, District
		Leon Observers - Maryland	Top Radio
		Police Headquarters - RiverGee	
		LEON Observer - RiverGee	
		ECC Observers	
		St. Mark Episcopal Church	
		Police Commander, Cavalla Border Post, Ivory Coast	
		Chairman of Chiefs Pleebo	
		Tubman University	
		NEC River Gee County	
		Liberia Peace Building Office	
		NEC Maryland County	
		County Inspector, Maryland County	
		Liberian Youth Development Institute (LIYODI)	
		Liberia Women Initiative for Development (LIWIND)	
		SEWODA (LNGO)	