



**ALL PEOPLES CONGRESS (APC)**  
**MOTTO: ACTION PROGRESS COMMITMENT**

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**Addressed To The Nation**

**Dr Samura Matthew Wilson Kamara,**

**Leader and Presidential Candidate for All Peoples Congress**

**Venue: New Brookfields Hotel, Jomo Kenyatta Road, New  
England Ville, Freetown**

**14 June 2023**

**Your Excellencies**

**Members of the Fourth Estate**

**Fellow Sierra Leoneans**

**I crave your indulgence, patience and understanding to provide you with an exceptionally detailed address on the APC's grave Concerns Over Mr Mohamed Konneh of ECSL and Our Security Forces's efforts in Undermining Electoral Integrity on June 24, 2023, and the Potential for Creating Instability in Sierra Leone.**

## **My fellow citizens**

Ten days from today, on 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2023, Sierra Leone is scheduled to hold its fifth democratic elections during our post conflict period. These elections are extremely important to everyone in Sierra Leone. They are about bringing in a new ERA and allowing the people of Sierra Leone at home and abroad to make their democratic choices of Presidential, parliamentary and local government leadership. They are about us politicians giving democratic space, peace and security to those making these choices irrespective of party politics, tribal or regional affiliations, gender and religion. They are about giving the people of Sierra Leone ample opportunity to choose between two opposing Systems of governance.

First, it is the system which we have experienced over the last five years and which is characterized by various documented human rights abuses, stifling of opposition voices, a shrinking of the people's democratic space, open tribal divide, regional marginalisation and widespread unprovoked, unexplained and uninvestigated political violence. This situation has led to mass killings, molestation, harassment, and police brutality against the citizenry across the country. It is a system that has woefully failed the people, economically, socially and politically.

The second system is one that gave way to the leadership of the first system, with which every Sierra Leonean is now tired of and is therefore ready to pay the ultimate price, provide their resources and energy for a big bang change back to the second system. This second system has a positive and envied track record of a strong focus on national development; on improving the lives and livelihoods of all Sierra Leoneans without looking for tribe or region; on respecting human rights and the rule of Law; and on ensuring that every Sierra Leonean is protected and secure. This, in 2018, allowed a smooth

democratic transfer of power to the first system whose leader wouldn't want to let go much against the WILL of the people.

I know you have all been eagerly waiting to hear from me, it has been a very hectic few weeks but I thank God for supernatural strength and favour! What God cannot do does not exist!

### **Fellow Sierra Leoneans**

It has been a tough 5 years for all of us - the young, the old, the women, the traders and their businesses, the transporters, the teachers and students, the police and military officers, the temnes, the mendes, the fullahs and yalunkas, the kurankos and limbass, the susus and the krios, the lokos and all other tribes. The misery and suffering we have endured in the last five years know no boundaries. They have pushed us too far, enough is enough!

The ballot box should be the answer to the people's choice but as we can all see from the actions so far of The ECSL it is obvious that they have something else up their sleeves. Our APC campaign in particular, has been subjected to police and military intimidation/molestation/embarrassment/brutality and stress. Our supporters in the Southeast have borne the brunt of this hostility. But guess what, God has seen us through it all and he will continue the work He has started to a well-deserved end for us. As is common knowledge, the Military and the Police are meant to serve and protect the people and they must in no way be politically biased but we are seeing otherwise. The people of Sierra Leone are sending a message as they have tried to do in many occasions but have been cast aside like trash!

Out of the millions of ID cards ECSL produced, 90% are so badly printed ! No one has been brought to Justice for such an injustice to the people of Sierra Leone. The people are asking why has nothing been done about it?! Why has ECSL chosen to ignore all correspondences sent to them. Mr Konneh has chosen to ignore all correspondences maybe because of 'orders from above'. We will not

accept Ballot boxes loaned embarrassingly from our neighboring countries. We should be told why we cannot procure from our own resources or from donor support new sealed Boxes?

I am assuring all Sierra Leoneans that I will do everything in my power to ensure an improved life. So please stick with me and by me, and you will see the difference as the second system which we all knew and benefited from in the immediate 10 years and which will reemerge on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Before God, we are one people and one nation! My Responsibility to the youths: Please abstain from violence and from this rampant use of Drugs. You are all in my thoughts and in my plans! We will get you off the streets! But you have to desire more for yourselves!

These elections on 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2023 are therefore not about Samura Kamara per se neither must they be about a second term for President Julius Maada Bio, Paopa. They are about building a better future for Sierra Leone and, who can best secure this!!!

It is with a sense of utmost urgency and deep concern that I am addressing you regarding the loss of integrity of the electoral processes in Sierra Leone and the dangers it poses to the unity, peace, democracy and stability of Sierra Leone. As you may recall, over the past five years, the APC, along with other members in the Consortium of Progressive Political Parties (CoPPP), has diligently communicated with you and our esteemed international partners about the unfolding undemocratic and unconstitutional developments in our nation under President Bio's PAOPA regime.

Today, however, as leader and presidential candidate of the APC for the forthcoming June 24 presidential, parliamentary and local government elections, I find myself compelled, on behalf of the APC and you all, to emphasise the gravity of the flaws in the ongoing electoral processes and the potentially far-reaching consequences that

loom ominously on the horizon. I have painfully categorised the critical issues across six broad themes which I am obliged to discuss in further detail.

### **First, Constituting the ECSL and Management of their Operations**

Mr Mohamed Konneh was appointed Chairman of the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL) in a manner that epitomises the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) Government's flagrant disrespect for the rule of law and its underlying intent to undermine the integrity of the 2023 elections. Based on the provisions in Chapter IX (Sections 32-34), of The 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, specifically on the appointment of the Electoral Commissioner, the APC strongly protested Mr Konneh's appointment. This was communicated to the President on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020, and the party's leadership in Parliament voted against his nomination, as he is constitutionally unqualified for the role. Fifty-one Members of Parliament voted against his appointment. Specifically, the APC contended with the following aspects of his appointment:

- The consultation and appointment- Mr Konneh was imposed as the head of the Commission without due consultation with leaders of other political parties, as stipulated by the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. The President merely informed the leaders of opposition parties of his decision. Despite the APC's appeals to reconsider this appointment, the President unilaterally forged ahead, dismissing our concerns.
- The qualifications of the candidate- According to section 32(4) (a) & (b) of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, "A person shall not be qualified for an appointment as a member of the Electoral Commission if he/she is not qualified to be elected as a Member of Parliament. Or the person should not be a public official as in (Minister, Deputy Minister, Member of Parliament

or public officer)." Mohamed Konneh was the Director General (DG) of the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) (a presidential appointment, and not a promotion based on a distinguished public service background) at the time of his appointment as Chairman.

- The expected independence of the candidate-The Electoral Commissioner is expected to exercise his functions independently and impartially, without interference from any external sources. However, Mr. Konneh is believed to be a registered member of the SLPP and a well-known SLPP activist.

Since assuming the position of Chairman, Konneh has pursued a troubling policy of ethnicization and arrogant and heavy-handed management mode within the Electoral Commission. He has systematically replaced experienced staff with purported 'PAOPA' loyalists, chosen for their perceived ability to perpetuate an unpopular government in power against the will of the people.

The expansion of the Commission without any substantiated assessment or needs analysis vividly portrays a disdain for professionalism and operational efficiency. In 2022, over 21 positions, including Voter Education and Training Officers (VETOs), Assistant District Elections Managers (ADEMS), District Elections Managers (DEMS), Election Officers and Information Technology focal persons (one for each region), Graphic Designers, and Estate Engineers were filled. The recruitment was shrouded in such secrecy that the existing employees of the Commission who wished to apply for those positions were asked to resign. Consequently, no existing ECSL staff (some of them with over 10 years of experience and with master's degree) was shortlisted for the interview. As most analysts have found, over 80% of the staff involved in the management of elections were recruited from the Southeast of the country and are well-known sympathisers of the 'PAOPA' regime. This sad ethnically based recruitment pattern cuts across all public institutions in the country

Such unwarranted staffing approach has not only undermined the morale of the Commission's workforce, but it has also severely compromised its capacity to discharge its responsibilities with competence and impartiality. It is evident that Mr Konneh's unwavering resolve to execute his assigned agenda, which primarily serves the Bio administration's pursuit of another term, is an alarming indication of the imminent electoral manipulation that looms ahead. The APC has made significant efforts to engage him constructively, but he has shunned those efforts and has continued with the manipulation of the electoral process against the principle of free and fair elections.

### **Second, the Manipulation of the Legal Framework for Electoral Governance and Management in Sierra Leone.**

From the outset, amid a progressively shrinking democratic space, it has become evident that the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP)-led Government, has embarked on a deliberate path to manipulate the electoral process. This disconcerting objective has been pursued through blatant tinkering with the electoral legal framework and disregarding the plethora of recommendations put forth by international and national observation missions following the 2018 elections. It was intended for those recommendations to address the structural and contextual challenges in those elections in order to fortify the electoral regime for the upcoming 2023 elections.

Beyond the blatant disregard for those recommendations, the SLPP Government also forced through several pieces of legislation less than a year before the 2023 elections- The Political Parties Regulation Commission Act 2022, The Local Government Act 2022, The Public Elections Act 2022, The Proportional Representation Regulations and The Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act 2022. The APC welcomes the progressive provisions in some of the legislations, such as those geared towards promoting the participation of women in the

political and other decision-making spaces and the efficiency of the country's electoral dispute resolution process. However, we condemned and continue to condemn provisions that have skewed the electoral framework in favour of the SLPP in the grand scheme of ongoing election manipulation and voter disenfranchisement plans. Further, the abrupt change from the "First Past the Post" system to the Proportional Representation system signifies a calculated strategy by the ruling party to undermine electoral integrity and set the stage for potential political instability. The conditions necessary for a PR electoral system were never fully met. It may be recalled that the APC's fight against legislation detrimental to current and future generations had been made extremely difficult since the illegitimate and forceful removal of ten APC elected members of Parliament in May 2019 by the SLPP; resulting in the APC losing its majority in Parliament.

### **Third, Laying the Foundation for Rigged Elections via a Deliberately Flawed Census**

In July 2020, the SLPP Government commenced the process of conducting a new census, dubbed the 'Mid-Term Census,' that can only be described as untimely and unnecessary. This flawed census, lacking any legal basis, was orchestrated with the explicit intention of sowing chaos and facilitating electoral manipulation. In the end, the results showed an extraordinary rise in population in SLPP strongholds. These are in gross misalignment with objective and scientific population growth projections; other prior complementary data collection exercises such as the Annual School Census and the Freetown City Council property rate database, and socio-economic migration patterns. In fact, in the period of unprecedented rural-urban migration, according to the Mid Term 2021 Census, urban Freetown lost over 40% of its population. The credibility deficits were also unequivocally exposed by both local and international actors. For example, the World Bank and



the European Union discredited the technical quality of the process and the subsequently published manipulated figures by Statistics Sierra Leone.

Moreover, the utilisation of this flawed census data for electoral boundary delimitation has resulted in the ad-hoc allocation of seats that undeniably favour ruling party strongholds. Additionally, the distribution of voter registration centres, based on discredited midterm census data, is deeply troubling, as it fails to present an accurate reflection of the actual population of the country. This deliberate distribution of voter registration centres clearly aims to suppress registration and turnout in the North-Western regions in a bid to justify the flawed midterm census data and disenfranchise thousands of voters.

#### **Fourth, Manipulation of Electoral Data**

In recent months, the measures undertaken by the ECSL have intensified our concerns regarding the integrity of the electoral process. The production of blurred and substandard Voter Identity Cards; the repeated failure to meet deadlines regarding the submission of credible voter registration data, and the subsequent release of highly questionable data, have raised serious doubts about the Commission's commitment to conducting free and fair elections.

With the corrupt, non-transparent and politically non inclusive nature of the procurement processes by the ECSL, it is crucial for us, including our objective development partners of Sierra Leone, to note that the APC believes that these actions are setting the stage for the rigging of the elections. The impact of this procurement and distribution of blurred and poor-quality Voter Identity Cards is unfathomable.

It is worth noting that the ECSL has missed all legal deadlines to submit credible and correct data of registered voters as provided by law. The APC complained for several weeks, but our complaints went unheeded. In the end, the Commission released incomplete and highly questionable data less than a month to the elections. Our thorough

assessment has revealed numerous irregularities within that data, such as the inclusion of deceased individuals and non-existent names, as well as the exclusion of granular voting centre or polling station details per voter. Furthermore, our assessment found the use of a practice known as "net dragging", which resulted in the ECSL shifting of voter names from the Northwest to the Southeast, an apparent endeavour to meet the SLPP's projected election outcomes.

### **On Voter Verification/Registration Process**

The Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL) had conducted what it called a 'Voter Verification/Registration' for the 2023 multi-tier elections. The registration exercise, which was conducted from 3rd September to 4th October 2022, (extended by two days) was meant for citizens who had already registered and voted in previous elections to confirm their biometrics, review their personal information, and make corrections or inclusions where necessary. At the same time, it was also to register those who had not been registered previously. But, again, the voter verification/registration process was characterised by numerous structural hiccups and was flawed from the start.

In respect of 'First Time Voters', the ECSL violated its own rules and legal provisions on the eligibility/identification criteria relating to this process. Part IV of Public Elections Act 2022, Section 24 stipulates that citizens are eligible to register either with (a) a birth certificate or a naturalisation certificate; (b) a statutory declaration giving particulars of his birth; (c) the testimony of a member of the Local Council in the area of his residence; (d) National Identification Number; or (e) any other satisfactory evidence of entitlement to be registered as voter. These provisions were blatantly ignored, and in addition, where the ECSL did not allow first time voters to register, they failed to issue rejection forms to these citizens. There were widespread and verified reports of first-time voters, especially in Freetown, being turned away from registering to vote.

### **On Voter Exhibition and Verification Exercise**

ECSL subsequently conducted a staggered 5-day exhibition and verification exercise between 24th November and 28th November in respect of which there was minimal public sensitization. Consequently,

the turnout of registrants for verification was understandably so very low. For those who did visit the registration centres for verification, there were many reports of missing data. But in spite of the prevalence of missing data, many registration centres did not have the Inclusion Forms that were to be completed for those registrants whose data did not appear during the verification process.

### **On Voter ID Cards Collection Exercise and Results**

ECSL conducted a “voter ID card collection” exercise from 7th to 16th April. Registered voters were to collect their voter ID cards from the centres where they registered. The voter ID cards issued were of such extreme poor quality that the images on most of them are unidentifiable. Such a situation would no doubt further undermine the integrity, fairness and inclusiveness of the June 24 polls. We hold this view because the difficulty in identifying the real holders of the voter IDs would become a barrier to voting which could increase the risk of fraud. This is apart from the fact that there were irregularities with the procurement processes for the voter ID cards, in addition to the fact that our party was excluded in participating in the process. Of note is that we were not furnished with details relating to who printed, how many cards were printed, where they were printed, when they arrived, how and who received them and so on. As at 17th April, according to the ECSL [press release], approximately 2.6 million voter ID cards (77% of those issued), had been collected with 9,601 misplaced voters, 5,205 without photos and 502 mismatched. We are yet to be informed on current status of the cards.

These actions not only give rise to deep apprehension but also hold the potential to subvert the peace, security, and stability of our nation; as such, anomalies are bound to incite public discontent.

### **Fifth, The Rapid Erosion of Confidence and Trust in the Judiciary, Parliament, Audit Sierra Leone and the ACC**

It is the belief of the general public and the APC party that the Judiciary and other accountability and transparency fiduciary institutions such as Parliament, Audit Sierra Leone and the Anti - Corruption Commission

have demonstrated no attempt to regain the confidence and trust of the public, which they have lost in the last five years under this brutal and illiberal Government. The willingness of the leadership of those institutions, in particular, the ACC and several civil society organizations to be instrumentalised by this PAOPA Government represent the most significant erosion of our democratic achievements in the last 20 years. It is poses the most imminent threat to peace and stability during this election period.

### **Sixth, State-sponsored and orchestrated Intimidation and Violence against voters**

The ruling party continues implementing its policy of violence and intimidation of opposition voices and activists across the country. This has been palpably obvious with direct attacks on APC supporters and members across the country, with the most recent incident occurring during an assault on my campaign convoy in Kono—the fourth such incident in a month.

Regrettably, our personal security and the safety of our supporters can no longer be entrusted in the hands of the state security apparatus. Senior officials of the PAOPA government machinery have repeatedly made inflammatory pronouncements, creating an atmosphere of intimidation and violence. The authorities have openly ignored flagrant human rights violations committed by ruling party agents and their hired thugs, who operate with impunity in SLPP strongholds. On a daily basis, these thugs obstruct our supporters from displaying campaign materials and engaging in lawful political activities designated for the APC.

Harassment, including acid attacks and physical assaults on our female candidates and supporters, have been reported in Bonthe, Falaba, and the Western Area. There have been incidents, clearly shown on social

media, where women have been beaten and stripped naked in many parts of the country to the conspicuous silence of the security agencies.

These despicable acts do not only expose deep-rooted contempt for women and youth by the ruling party but also their targeting of women and youth who have openly displayed strong support and sympathies for the APC because of the continued misery and sharp deterioration in their lives and livelihoods. We are in no doubt that this is part of a wider strategy to frustrate and undermine the participation of the women and youth whom they have found to have strong sympathies for and deep faith in the APC's capacity to saving Sierra Leone from deeper economic, social and political collapse.

It is imperative to highlight the highly improper and militarised approach adopted by this Government towards human rights and the rule of law. The police force, instead of upholding justice, has become an instrument of oppression. With a bellicose and trigger-happy posture, they readily resort to shooting and violence against the defenceless populace, even without provocation. This heavy-handed approach has effectively silenced the voices of critical civil society organisations, hindered the participation of women and the youth. It has also severely undermined public confidence in safety and security for the upcoming elections. Equally alarming is the escalating endeavour to weaponize ethnicity within the ruling party's strongholds. Youth and former Kamajor combatants have been openly mobilised to instigate attacks on opposition supporters and individuals from other ethnic groups residing in the Southeast. Some of these groups have openly declared their localities as no-go areas for APC campaign teams.

The SLPP government has made no effort to conceal its intolerance and therefore its plans to unleash brutality upon those who oppose them and wish to cast their votes against their regime. Over the past six months, it has openly undertaken an extensive procurement of arms for the military and security forces. The ostentatious delivery of these weapons

and ammunition, often in public view, has raised concerns among the citizenry who question whether Sierra Leone is on the verge of war or actively preparing for one. The APC holds deep concerns that these weapons and ammunition have been dispersed throughout the country and may be distributed to rogue elements recruited by the Government. Alongside this worrisome trend, the military has been placed on high alert, intensifying apprehension. In the last five years, the presence of the Police and Military in the streets and roads everywhere in the country has progressively intensified, more than ever before, making Sierra Leone a Police State.

The ruling party's continued plot to rig the elections is now abundantly evident. And any opposition to this calculated scheme is swiftly deemed a threat to the interest of the SLPP and their agents, resulting in the arbitrary arrest and detention of opposition members without trial. Disturbingly, we have received intelligence that this strategy will be fully implemented on election day, reinforced by an impending nationwide internet shutdown and an unconstitutional declaration of a state of emergency.

**Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,** it has become evident in the last five years that the attitude of the current President to governance is militarised and characterised by the ethno-regionalisation of politics and power and the imposition of his will on the people. Instances include the illegal appointment of a Speaker of Parliament and the head of ECSL, sacking of the Auditor General etc. Trapped by a militant ethnic cabal known as 'PAOPA' and an overbearing wife who continues to display a naked animosity for opponents of the regime, it is without gainsaying that President Bio has lost the ability to govern and lead the country to safe and secured elections on June 24. The People of Sierra Leone voted the husband as President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, not the wife.

Alarming as these trends may be, it is crucial to emphasise the following that:

- The APC has consistently been patient and restrained and though provoked on several occasions including being labelled as **terrorists** by President Bio, we did not react.
- We have consistently chose peace over provocations and oppression.
- We reiterate **the All Peoples Congress (APC) Party full committed to upholding peace, security, and stability in our country and look forward to delivering on all the commitments we have made in our ‘Wan Nation Manifesto;.**
- We especially call upon the SLPP and all other stakeholders to demonstrate the same unwavering commitment to consistently choose peace over provocations and oppression.
- We further call upon President Bio and all other political stakeholders to strictly adhere to the recently signed Peace Declaration for ensuring free, fair and non-violent Presidential and General elections on June 24, 2023.

However, the gravity of these developments, as outlined above, also demands the immediate attention and intervention of the international community, particularly the International Criminal Court, to safeguard the democratic processes and prevent the relapse of Sierra Leone into conflict as planned by this SLPP Government. As a nation, we have sacrificed significantly to maintain the hard-earned peace we have enjoyed since 2002. Any attempt to reverse these gains must be firmly addressed, and all must be done to ensure free and fair elections.

It is in view of the above, that under my leadership, the APC demands the following:

- The ECSL guarantees that the counting of ballots, tallying and certification of results will take place, initially, at the polling centre/station level as required by Law;

- The tallying of votes must be conducted transparently through **MANUAL and not ELECTRONIC** processes in the presence of party agents and the local and international observers;
- That the APC be provided with the ECSL data management structure and proposed tallying system and protocols for the 24th June 2023 elections to aid our appreciation of how the ECSL will be managing the electoral data, how the data are going to be processed, and how the results are to be tallied and announced;
- That in the interest of transparency and integrity of the results, particularly in light of the tremendous mistrust created by ECSL's actions and inactions so far, the results be transmitted manually and that the Political Parties be granted full, unfettered access and secured participation in the manual transmission of the elections results at all levels;
- That the ECSL should immediately release the disaggregated and comprehensive final voter register detailing the centre names, codes, districts, voter names, ages, addresses, citizenships identifiable photos and fingerprints/signatures;
- That an independent technical forensic audit of the voter register be done to ascertain the veracity of the ages and identities of voters. This exercise must be done with the participation of representatives of political parties, regional, continental and international partners. This is informed by our analysis of the data in the journals used for the collection of Voter IDs which shows thousands of underage voters, thousands more of first-time voters indiscriminately allocated to Kenema, Kailahun and other parts of the south and eastern regions. We also found out thousands of purported voters who, according to their dates of births in the said journals, are over 200 years old. These several anomalies, some of them too basic, absolutely undermine not just the integrity of the FVR, but also the capacity of ECSL to conduct the June



elections. This is owing to the fact that over and over again, this Commission has demonstrated that it does not have the competence, integrity and neutrality to conduct free, fair, credible, inclusive and acceptable elections;

- That as part of the process of restoring trust in the Electoral process and to ascertain the integrity of results, the usual support of independent technical assistants from our international partners including the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), be allowed to play their usual technical support role to ECSL;
- The National Electoral Commission must facilitate the unhindered access and presence of universally accredited party agents and local and international observers nationwide;
- That the Government must immediately halt security agents and paid assailants from obstructing APC campaigns and intimidating our supporters;
- That the presence of the security forces across the country before, during and after the Vote must be minimized in order not to scare voters;
- That any loss of life must be subjected to a thorough judicial investigation;
- That internationally recognised Electoral Judges should be deployed with support from the International Community to swiftly adjudicate electoral disputes;

- That the Government must ensure the free movement, safety and security of all voters before, during and after the polling day;
- That the Government should guarantee that there will be no disruptions or shutdown of the internet and/or declaration of a state of emergency before and after the declaration of results, as is being currently mooted in certain quarters. All of the above demands have timelines and they must be addressed within 72 hours

### **Fellow citizens**

The questions around the integrity of the existing voter register, the poor quality of the Voter ID Cards, and critically; the tallying at the Polling Centre and district; as well as the manual transfer of the results are too many and too serious for the APC to make any compromises on because they portend real and credible antecedents to confusion, frustration among electorates and violence. Most importantly, electronic transmission exposes the elections results to manipulation which would result in an outcome that would neither be credible nor acceptable.

You are all witnesses to our long standing and persistent demand for the publication of the disaggregated Final Voter Register (FVR) and how ECSL repeatedly made commitment to doing so, appealing for political parties and the public to allow them some time to sanitise the register. After an unprecedented delay, last week, you all further witnessed the embarrassing ECSL drama relating to the release of what they believed was the final disaggregated FVR. Just within hours of ECSL's official release of that data to political parties, they shocked everyone by recalling the FVR which they had spent an inordinate amount of time on, on the basis that what they submitted to the political parties was the wrong copy. If an electoral commission, with all its multitude technical/professional staff, could not discern the appropriate copy of such a sensitive and highly critical document from garbage

before sharing it with elections stakeholders, how would anyone trust their capacity to effectively run credible elections?

State Capture of the ECSL makes it worrying that this institution no longer has the free will to conduct the elections in a free, fair transparent manner. The government has ensured that all of the commissioners are sympathetic to the ruling party and they themselves have confirmed this suspicion by their actions and statements. Few months ago, there was a leaked audio circulating on social media of the Electoral Commissioner South, Edmond Alpha, condemning the international community for their push for transparency in the electoral process and suggesting that they were trying to implement a regime change agenda. More recently, the senior management of the ECSL were seen posing for a picture doing the SLPP's 'Five More Years' campaign posture.

Within the subregion, Sierra Leone was the last beacons of democracy but in the last five years, the SLPP has been deliberate about democratic reversal and the signs are now very clear that they seem all set to kill and bury our hard-won democracy. President Bio and the SLPP should know that the APC, which is the grassroot party and a Congress of all Sierra Leoneans stands ready to gallantly and unapologetically defend our democracy by every legal and democratic means.

Failure by President Bio and his SLPP Government to heed to the aforementioned considerations before the elections on 24th June 2023 will leave the APC with no option but to conclude that the SLPP's intention, goal and primary objective is not to conduct free, fair, non-violent and credible elections. Accordingly, the APC will therefore demand that Mr Mohamed Konneh and all electoral Commissioners resign forthwith, to be replaced by an independent internationally accredited team of electoral commissioners, who will conduct fresh electoral processes. Several of ECSL's actions and inactions relating to the management of the electoral processes have irreparably ripped apart

its integrity, independence and public trust in its capacity to conduct free, fair, inclusive, credible elections which are acceptable to the citizens of this country.

Furthermore, in the strongest terms possible, **I wish to reiterate that the All Peoples Congress (APC) and its supporters will not accept any election results tainted by rigging or manipulation.** We are steadfast in our commitment to upholding the principles of national unity, democracy, transparency, and the will of the people. **Should there be any evidence of electoral malpractices or attempts to subvert the integrity of the electoral process, we will utilise all available legal and peaceful means to challenge such actions and ensure that the true voice of the Sierra Leonean people is heard.**

The SLPP will want to use the state security to intimidate the people but the people will show their power through the ballot box and will ensure that their votes are counted. We cannot and must not allow the SLPP to steal the elections and subject us to another five years of hardship, torment, oppression and divisiveness.

It is crucial that the international community stands alongside the people of Sierra Leone in this unequivocal position, firmly rejecting any results that do not reflect the genuine will of the voters. The consequences of allowing electoral manipulation to go unchecked before, during and after the vote would be detrimental to the democratic aspirations and stability of our beloved nation and the subregion.

We implore all Sierra Leoneans, elections observers, CSOs and the entire international community to join us in condemning any acts of election rigging and to support efforts to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process. The people of Sierra Leone deserve nothing less than a free, fair, non-violent and credible elections that accurately reflect their choices and aspirations for a robust democratic and prosperous future.

Meanwhile, I want to call on the people of Sierra Leone to come out and vote on the 24th, come rain, come sun shine, come the usual barrage of bullets or come anything else, to protect those votes.

The APC is not doing what others do for cheap popularity and applause. Our passion and resilience in the pursuit of truth, justice and accountability are driven by our own convictions and commitment towards a decent, democratic and peaceful society. We will commit to continue to stand firmly on these principles.

Let me end by demanding that President Bio instructs the immediate release of all those peaceful APC supporters and national patriots who have been unlawfully arrested, molested and detained including Arthur Pearce and many others over the last few days. I will also implore the President to authorise the security forces to stop intimidating APC members through house searches and vandalization of property. It is alleged on social media that at a recent meeting in the presence of Mr Mohammed Konneh, Chief Electoral Commissioner, a selected team of SLPP hired thugs was put together to conduct planned raids on several polling centres in the APC strong holds on election day with a view to disrupt the voting process or cause over voting leading to cancellation of such stations. Of course, as a peaceful and law-abiding citizen, I wouldn't want to believe this information and so must President Bio. I am very convinced that in the course of time there will be revelations on any surreptitious plans the SLPP to rig and win the 24<sup>th</sup> June elections outside the regular and lawful Vote. IN GOD WE TRUST!!!

Let me also make it emphatically clear that based on engagements and polls conducted by the APC, it is extremely clear that the President and his PAOPA government are hugely unpopular and the voters have very little confidence in their ability to fix the most pressing problems facing the country right now, including a divided nation, a collapsed economy, and a cost-of-living crisis. Given that I, Samura Matthew Wilson

Kamara, am the preferred choice of the majority of Sierra Leoneans and I do represent their best HOPE and the most SUITED to handle these challenges, I am confident of victory. Any result that does not reflect this will be seriously called into question.

Since 2018, this government has shown that it does not care about due process and it does not respect the will of the people. Should the government attempt to challenge or subvert the will of the people, there will be dire consequences for the peace and stability of Sierra Leone and even graver international consequences for those persons who are found wanting in any plan to usurp power from the people.

My fellow Sierra Leoneans

VOTE APC, VOTE SAMURA KAMARA, VOTE TO SAVE SALONE

Thank you all

God Bless the Republic of Sierra Leone