



Frequently Asked Questions *about* **POLITICAL PARTIES, CANDIDATES AND SUPPORTERS**

Election of
President, Parliament
and Local Council
Sierra Leone
7 March 2018
7am - 5pm

For more information about
the National Electoral
Commission,
please visit:
www.nec.gov.sl

What is the role and responsibility of political parties in Sierra Leone?

According to the Constitution of Sierra Leone, political parties should participate in shaping political will, disseminate information on political ideas and national programmes, and sponsor candidates for Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government elections.

What is the Political Parties Registration Commission?

The Political Parties Registration Commission is established, according to the Constitution, appointed by the President, and guided by the Political Parties Act. It is responsible for registering all political parties, supervision of their conduct, and putting in place the regulations necessary to carry out its work.

What is the Code of Election Campaign Ethics?

The Public Elections Act obliges the NEC to publish the Code of Election Campaign ethics and to issue copies to every political party and candidate.

Are political parties required to sign Code of Election Campaign Ethics?

Yes. According to the Public Elections Act, acceptance of the code is a precondition for candidate nomination. This being the case, every political party registered in Sierra Leone has signed.

Not only are signatories bound to observe Code, they are also required to ensure compliance among their own party leaders, candidates, and supporters.

What are the rights and obligations of signatories to the Code of Election Campaign Ethics?

Signatories to the Code are entitled to present their political principles and ideas without fear of intimidation or threat; and to undertake activities commonly associated with election campaigns, including publication of materials, use of local media and campaign events.

Generally, signatories are obliged to cooperate with election officials to ensure safety and security before, during and after polls; and to maintain communications with other signatories to the Code.

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Signatories are obliged to:

- Respect the rights of all voters to enjoy freedom and secrecy;
- Respect the electoral process, refraining from the use of force, interference, or false information;
- Refrain from imitating symbols, stealing, damaging or destroying campaign materials;
- Refrain from activities that create or aggravate tension related to race, gender, ethnicity, language, class, region or religion;
- Ensure that criticism of other parties is confined to political – and not personal – issues;
- Respect the rights and freedom of other political parties to campaign and disseminate ideas, and refrain from obstructing their meetings or rallies;
- Refrain from using state power, privilege, influence or resources for campaign purposes;
- Refrain from using coercing individuals to vote for a particular candidate or party or to abstain from voting;
- Refrain from forgery, destruction, displacement or concealment of election materials; and
- Refrain from using private forces or militia to intimidate or gain political advantage.

Signatories must not engage in any form of campaigning – including use of media or holding political activities – twenty-four hours prior to election day; or within four hundred yards of polling centres on election day.

They are obliged to accept the outcome of the election, as certified by the National Electoral Commission (NEC). They may submit any grievances to the relevant authorities, but must comply with final decisions.

What is the campaign calendar and what is its purpose?

In accord with the Public Elections Act, the National Electoral Commission publishes a campaign calendar of events, to be held by political parties and candidates – with whom it first consults.

This calendar is shared with the public through Government Notice and is also communicated to the Inspector-General of the Police and local councils.

The calendar is intended to contribute to a peaceful, democratic environment in which each party has equal opportunity to be seen and heard throughout Sierra Leone.

What is campaign silence and what is its purpose?

In Sierra Leone, campaign silence is the twenty-four hour period, prior to election day, in which no political party or candidate may engage in campaign activities. This allows voters to reflect, peacefully, as they make their voting decisions.