

UNITED NATIONS



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UNITED NATIONS INTEGRATED PEACE BUILDING OFFICE IN SIERRA LEONE  
(UNIPSIL)

**Western Area Launching of the Declaration on the 2012 Elections**

**Statement by Mr. Jens Anders Toyberg-Frandzen, Executive Representative of  
the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone**

**26 September 2012**

Mr. Chairman,  
Honorable Minister,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to begin by congratulating the National Commission for Democracy and the Political Parties Registration Commission for this timely initiative of launching the Declaration on the 2012 Elections here in Freetown. I am also pleased to note that similar events will be organized in other parts of the country to reach out to all stakeholders and to reaffirm the commitments made in the declaration.

Four months have passed since Sierra Leone's major stakeholders signed on 18 May a declaration committing themselves to peaceful, free and fair elections in November 2012. A declaration, in which the National Electoral Commission reaffirmed its impartiality, the Council of Paramount Chiefs committed to political neutrality, the Sierra Leone Police affirmed their independence and professionalism, the Independent Media Commission committed to enforce the media code of conduct, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation promised to provide equal access to all shades of political opinion, and Civil Society, youth organizations, and women organizations agreed to work together for the peaceful conduct of the elections.

Since then, much has happened in preparing for the elections and implementing these commitments. Major milestone activities of the electoral calendar, such as completion of the voter registration exercise and nomination of candidates by political parties and others, have all proceeded without major incidents and peacefully. Political party leaders have been engaged and continue to engage in extensive tours throughout the country without hindrance and major incidents. Overall, the electoral process is well on track and on schedule, and some of the challenges encountered so far have been resolved and being resolved through dialogue and consultations among national stakeholders. This is indeed very encouraging, and all of us should continue to uphold our commitments and work together to maintain this positive political environment and spirit of dialogue and constructive engagement.

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Mr. Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

As the elections draw closer and the country soon enters into the campaign period, Sierra Leone's political leaders and all national stakeholders, political parties, election management bodies, security agencies, the media and civil society organizations are all expected to continue working together and play their respective roles responsibilities outlined in the declaration.

Attaining peaceful elections is not solely a matter for the Police and other security sector agencies but also depends on the ability of the political parties to control their supporters, instill a culture of respect for law and order and an abide by the Code of Conduct for Political Parties.

Likewise, it cannot be overemphasized that the Police and security sector personnel must continue to remain impartial in the discharge of their duties in order to build confidence in the electorate that they are to serve.

The National Electoral Commission is at the centre of the technical arrangements for the smooth conduct of the elections. Its professionalism will be tested by the challenge and complexities in the elections which among others includes the holding of four elections on one day. The Commission and its stakeholders, particularly the political parties, need to continue to engage in constructive dialogue and maintain an effective channel of communication and consultations in particular through the Political Parties Liaison Committee.

A lot has been said, and I need not repeat, of the influence the media can have on the elections. It should play, as I hope it would, a constructive role in the electoral process through fair and accurate journalism that avoids exacerbating polarization and division or other undesirable factors which can undermine the peaceful conduct of the elections.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

At its recent meeting, the United Nations Security Council welcomed the signing of the declaration on the 2012 elections by all Sierra Leone's major election stakeholders, and called for its full implementation. The Council, in reaffirming the lead role and responsibilities of Sierra Leone's political leaders and institutions for the peaceful conduct of the elections, underscored the need for continuing the constructive dialogue and collaboration among all Sierra Leonean stakeholders.

Sierra Leone's institutions, in particular the NEC, PPRC, IMC, the Sierra Leone Police, the NCD, all others involved in the elections are expected to demonstrate their lead role collectively and individually and to effectively discharging their responsibilities. The international community, including the United Nations, will continue to support these national efforts.

In concluding, I would like once again to commend the National Commission for Democracy for the timely initiative in launching the declaration today in Freetown, and for the planned similar events in other parts of the country.

I would also like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the United Nations continued support and collaboration with the NCD and all other stakeholders to ensure the implementation of the Declaration on the 2012 elections.

Thank you very much for your attention.

*ENDS*