



*One Country
One People*

LOCAL COUNCIL BYE-ELECTION IN WARD 042, LOWER BAMABARA, KENEMA DISTRICT

PRESS STATEMENT

Freetown February 15, 2010. On Tuesday February 9, 2010, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) organized a very successful rally as part of the campaign for the Local Council Bye-election. Wednesday February 10 was the campaign day for the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC) and Thursday February 11, 2010 was the day for the All Peoples Congress (APC) as agreed by all Political Parties, National Electoral Commission (NEC) and Political Party Registration Commission (PPRC).

On Thursday February 11, 2010, thugs led by notorious APC youth, Adamu traveled from Kono to join the other APC thugs based in Tongo Fields. These thugs raged invectives of all sorts on SLPP supporters, particularly the Fullahs and Mandingoes since the SLPP candidate named Ibrahim Jalloh is a Fullah. Adamu had with him a pistol whilst other members of his gang carried with them knives machetes and bottles in full view of the Police and residents of Tongo Fields. At a point, Adamu even removed the police cap off the head of the Local Unit Commander (LUC) in the presence of some residents of Tongo Fields.

The Member of Parliament for Constituency 14, Honorable Francis Konuwa who became worried over the security of his people as a result of these developments reported the matter to the Police. The SLPP Regional Chairman, East, Ambassador Patrick Foya, the SLPP District Chairman, Mr. Arthur Koroma and Mr. Alphonso Komeh, SLPP Chairman for Constituency 14, also reported the matter to the Assistant Inspector General of Police, East Mr. Al-Sheik Kamara in Kenema. The National Chairman also informed the Head of Political Affairs, Mr. Gebremedhin Hagoss, Chief Political Affairs and Peace Consolidation Section of UNIPSIL and the Assistant Inspector General of Police. The National Secretary-General also informed Mr. Hagoss of these ugly developments.

Although official campaign ended on Thursday February 11, 2010, the APC supporters were out through out the day in the Ward openly campaigning and at the same time throwing insults on SLPP supporters. They intimidated SLPP supporters hoping that they would abandon their homes and would not turn up for voting on polling day.

On the same Friday, February 11, 2010, the Minister of Mines and Political Affairs who is also the National Publicity Secretary of the APC, Mr. Alpha Kanu traveled to Tongo Fields with the Resident Ministers East and South, Mr. William J Smith and Mr. Musa Tarwallie respectively and some civil servants from his Ministry. They were all out there to campaign on a non-campaign day in the name of discussing with the community matters relating to Koidu Holdings. After a meeting with the Police and the heightened tension,

Police advised them that the atmosphere was not conducive for such a meeting at such a time.

Notwithstanding all of the above, voting started on Saturday February 13, 2010 on time and the election was conducted peacefully. At about 4 pm, the APC group led by Adamu then started the job for which they were brought to Tongo. They resumed pelting of stones on the house of the Honourable Member of Parliament, raging insults on SLPP supporters and started to physically attack some of our Party members. These actions took place around the Town Centre. However, all of these did not distract any of the Party members and NEC officials from the election process. Polling closed by about 5 pm and counting commenced and went on undisturbed.

At the end of counting and when it was clear from our party agents that the SLPP won in all the polling stations, the APC irate youths scaled up their violent conducts. This situation warranted more police presence to protect both NEC officials and polling materials. However, this did not stop the furious youths from attempting to attack the NEC officials and other persons who were on their way to the Police station. The prompt action of the Police repelled these youths and several persons including the NEC officials, some SLPP Party agents and other observers all went to the Police for protective custody. Later, the Police escorted the NEC officials with all the polling materials out of Tongo.

At that point, the situation became chaotic. The APC youths blocked the road leading to Kenema preventing all SLPP persons from leaving the township and threatened to burn down vehicles. Later, we learnt that the house of the SLPP Councilor for Ward 043, Joseph Amadu was on fire. The Police did not arrest any of the APC youths. Party members who came to witness the poll left the town using different routes.

On Sunday February 14, 2010 the Police with the help of APC supporters arrested 41 SLPP supporters and nobody from the APC. They are currently in the Kenema Police for questioning and possible prosecution. The Party considers this unfair action by the Police as an attempt to demoralize our determined SLPP supporters and cow them to submission.

The SLPP would like to express utter dismay at the injustice of arresting only SLPP supporters whenever there is violent between APC and SLPP.

The national executive would like to thank all members who were involved in the campaign and those who voted for the SLPP candidate as well as those who ensured that the voting went on peacefully. The national executive would also like to express its sympathy to those whose properties were destroyed, those who were injured and others who were molested and affected in different ways

Finally, the SLPP calls for transparent, fair and speedy investigation of the incident and the release of innocent persons arrested.

Jacob Jusu Saffa
National Secretary-General