



**REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**  
**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**  
**(INCHR)**



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Special Press Statement  
INCHR

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As we approach Voters Registration on February 1, 2017, the INCHR recognizes the critical role of the Elections in promoting human rights, sustaining peace and enhancing democratic stability in Liberia. These elections of 2017 represent the first since 1944 when one democratically elected administration will hand over power to another democratically elected administration. Against this background, the INCHR would like to inform the Liberian people and the international community that it will be actively engaged with the electoral processes to ensure that the election processes are peaceful, participatory and nondiscriminatory.

Therefore, INCHR would like to call upon all stakeholders to reflect on the following:

- I. **Inclusion:** The Commission urges all to encourage inclusive participation with keen emphasis on the participation of women, youths as well as persons who are physically challenged. The INCHR calls on political parties to not only seek votes from women and youths, but must include women and youth from diverse backgrounds on their tickets. The INCHR highly encourages the recruitment of physically challenged persons to serve as poll workers and other activities in the electoral process;
- II. **Equitable Use of Public Resources:** The Commission calls upon the Government to ensure that public resources such as halls and media (electronic and print) are afforded to all without discrimination or unnecessary restrictions. The Commission would also like to admonish everyone to use public resources responsibly (zero tolerance for vandalism or abuse of any public asset)
- III. **Access to Polling Centers:** The Commission calls upon authorities at the NEC to put voting centers in places that the general populace can easily and reasonably access, taking into consideration the special needs of some segments of our population such as the elderly, expectant mothers and physically challenged persons.
- IV. **Use of Inflammatory Language or Hate Speech:** The Commission recognizes that the quest for political competition can best be achieved through vigorous campaigns; however, the Commission urges all to absolutely refrain from using any inflammatory language or engage in hate speech. Hate speech and any inflammatory language

- violate the population's right to "freedom from fear", which is a fundamental human rights
- V. **The Media:** As the media remain the cornerstone of a democratic society which is sustained by information and education, the Commission highly encourages the media to treat all contestants with impartiality consistent with its professional code of ethics. We call on upon the media to expose any agenda bent on spreading falsehood during and after the election processes.
  - VI. **Security:** Giving the crucial role that an enabling security environment plays in promoting free and transparent elections, the INCHR admonishes all stakeholders including the Government, political parties and independent candidates to uphold a peaceful environment that fosters peaceful elections: the Commission calls on the Government security units to protect the NEC personnel and facilities at all times; guarantee the safety of all contestants as well as their offices and other assets.
  - VII. **Peaceful Resolution of Disputes:** The Commission wishes to admonish all stakeholders that elections might likely provoke charged situations. But all must bear in mind that only honest dialogue and respect for the rule of law remain the panacea for the amicable resolution of dispute and call upon all actors to invest heavily in dialogue and abstain from recourse to confrontation. At a minimum, the Commission encourages all to judiciously follow NEC's established guidelines on addressing grievances in case a grievance is occasioned.
  - VIII. **Sustained Public Education:** A thorough understanding of the electoral processes remains cardinal to the holding of free and transparent elections the world over; the Commission urges the NEC and other stakeholders to designed education programs that reflect the needs of Liberia's diverse population in terms of education and language requirements. The Commission urges the NEC and its partners develop concise messages that will address the needs of all especially as well as political parties to
  - IX. Finally, the Commission calls upon all Liberian citizens of the concerned aged to turn out in your numbers to register in a place of your choice, preferably a place conveniently suited to enable you participate in the electoral process.