



POLITICAL PARTIES REGISTRATION COMMISSION

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YOUTH GROUPS AND YOUTH SERVING AGENCIES SIGNS DECLARATION AHEAD OF THE 2012 ELECTIONS

5th October 2012: The Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) on Friday met with Youth Groups and Youth Serving Agencies at the Commissions headquarters in Freetown.

Addressing the meeting, the Chairman of the Commission Hon Justice M.E. Tolla Thompson says the meeting is part of the commission's effort in ensuring a peaceful, free from fear and violence free elections. He advised youth serving agencies to inform the commission when dealing with Political Parties.

He used the meeting to inform participants that the commission has eventually resolved the leadership impasse within the All Political Parties Youth Association (APPYA). He says the participation of youth in the electioneering process will yield good fruit if they are constantly engaged. He advised the youth not accept negative incentives from politicians that will lure them into violence before, during and after the 2012 elections. Sierra Leone he says belongs to all. **“This is your time”**, he concluded.

Speaking on behalf of the Inspector General of Police, Superintendent Francis Songu says, the leadership of the Sierra Leone Police is so far pleased with the conduct of the youth in the electoral process even though there had been minor intra party fracas. Whiles reminding the meeting of the role of the police, he informed that the police is well prepared to police the elections. The elections he says should be treated seriously and that the youth should not allow themselves to be used as scapegoats in perpetuating violence. The youth he says should think twice and

denounce violence in its entirety. Elections he says is not a do or die affair but a competition that will be won by one person/group. He reminded them of the offences in the Public Elections Act of 2012.

In his statement, the President of the National Youth Coalition, Ishmail Al-Sankoh Conteh lauded the idea of such forum and appealed that it continues. He says he is happy that marginalised youth are included in the meeting. He also advised that the commission to monitor the use of ex-combatants as body guards by political parties. Youth he says should be used as informants. He advised youth leaders to desist from politicising their youth groups/organisations.

In his statement, Ken Gana Conteh of the National Elections Watch says his organisation has been engaged in nationwide youth civic education on the rights and responsibilities of the youth in Sierra Leone. He also informed the meeting that some politicians are in the habit of buying voter ID Cards. To capacitate the youth, he says his organisation has paid for over one thousand youth to undertake the INEACE Course. He also informed the meeting his organisation needs over nine thousand observers to observe polling day. He encouraged youth to be part of their activities but advised them not to be partisan.

Speaking on behalf of the Centre for the Coordination of Youth Affairs, Ngollo Katta says APPYA is a good initiative as they will help in building a new political culture to build confidence and tolerance in Sierra Leone. He says his organisation is capacitating youth groups so that they will be able to engage state functionaries. The lack of capacity over the years has greatly affected the youth. He promised his organization's commitment and support towards the work of the PPRC.

The following formed the high point of the meeting:

Commitment to peace:

- Ibrahim Sorie Conteh (Firestone Community): says his community needs constant sensitization for peaceful elections as his community is very lawless. He says the police should continue with their regular visit to the community.
- Mohamed Babadi (Kingtom Youth Organisation) –asked that PPRC form a coalition of youth organisation to spread the message
- Ahmed Tejan (Kroo Bay Youth Organisation) – Kroo Bay he said is a community that is prone to violence. He advised that the sensitization be taken to his community.
- Abubakarr Kamara (Black Street Family)– Black Street he says is well known for violence sometimes these allegations are wrong.. He promised to take the message to his peers.
- Moses Morgan (Black Street Family) – says they’ve worked with PPRC before on non violence and political tolerance and that they’ve embarked on non violence campaign and Skills training. He said that they have bad eggs among themselves. PPRC to help them on sensitization that they are not bad people
- Foday Mansaray (Foday Government Wharf) – His area he says is very sensitive as they have a political party headquarters. Their problem he says is that certain group goes there and offend them. He promised to be informing the commission about offences.
- Salifu Turay (Grassfield Youth) – The East he says is vulnerable to violence.
- Albert Manley Mustapha (Friend of the Dead) – Informed the meeting that certain people now use the cemetery to perform rituals. He says they want to serve as informants to the commission

and other authorities as some criminals now use the cemetery as a place to avoid authorities.

- Wurie Mamadu Tamba(Global Youth Anti Corruption Sierra Leone) - informed the commission that his organization is on non violence campaign titled “my hands are clean”.
- Hashim Sesay RFM – failure to identify the problem of violence. RFM has been sidelined. This is the first forum that they’ve been included.
- CCYA Augusta A. Sankoh – their work is ongoing as they work on the minds of the youth. She advised the youth to be themselves.
- Mohamed Kamara (Cline Town Youth Organisation): says his area is prone to violence.

At the end of the meeting, it was agreed that such meeting be held every two weeks.

Represented in the meeting were, Kingtom Youth Development Organisation, Black Street Family, Black Street Family, Grassfield Youth Organisation, Sierra Leone Police, Red Flag Movement, Belgium Car Wash, Kroo Bay Youth Development Organization, Friends of the dead, Students for Peace and Development Sierra Leone, National Elections Watch, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation TV, Center for the Coordination of Youth Activities, Firestone Community Organisation, Kanikay Youth Organisation, Radio Democracy, Hill Cut Road Car Wash, Global Youth Anti Corruption Sierra Leone, Save Mama Salone, National Youth Coalition, Sierra Leone Amputee Sports Association, and West Africa Youth Network.

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