

## **CODE OF ELECTION CAMPAIGN ETHICS**

### **Section 148, Public Elections Act (2012)**

#### **PREAMBLE**

Noting the recent violent past of Sierra Leone, and the need for continued peace; and given the desirability for a free, fair, peaceful and well-regulated election and the avoidance of aggravation of ethnic tension and political discord, we agree and accept:

That a Code of Conduct for Campaign Activities, taken to mean all activities undertaken in furtherance of the electoral campaign for a political party or candidate will generally respect and contribute to the holding of a free and fair election;

To subscribe to the Code of Conduct and to the very best of our ability, to comply with and to take all reasonable steps to ensure its full observance;

To adhere/uphold conditions conducive to the conduct of free, fair and democratic elections within a climate of democratic tolerance in which political activities may take place without fear of coercion, intimidation or reprisals.

#### **APPLICATION OF THE CODE**

In this Code, "Party" includes:

Any entity that subscribed to this Code of Conduct, including independent candidates, political parties, alliances or coalitions of parties, and political movements other than parties; and

The candidate, leader, officials, members, agents, representatives and supporters of any entity that subscribed to this Code of Conduct.

"Campaign period" refers to:

The period of time during which the election campaign activities can legally take place as announced by the National Electoral Commission.

"Campaign Activities" refer to:

Any and all actions undertaken in the furtherance or promotion of a political party or candidate for election.

#### **COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE**

All Parties that have subscribed to this "Code":

Are bound by the Code;

Will take decisive steps to prohibit leaders, officials, candidates and members from infringing the Code; and

Must, therefore, instruct its leaders, officials, candidates and members to adhere to the terms of the Code; and dissuade its supporters from breaching the Code.

Will be responsible for breaches of the Code undertaken by supporters, officials, members, agents, and representatives.

Will not make false, frivolous or vexatious complaint or generally abuse the right to complain about violations of the Code.

The political party as represented by the Candidate who has subscribed to this Code will instruct party officials, members and supporters to observe the Code to ensure compliance.

### **PERMITTED CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES**

All Parties that have subscribed to this Code are entitled to undertake activities normally associated with election campaigns, including the publication of materials, use of national and local media, and the organization of campaign events as per the existing laws, rules and regulations.

### **COMPLIANCE WITH THE ELECTION PROCESS**

All Parties that have subscribed to this Code will co-operate with election officials to ensure:

The safety, security and integrity of voters, electoral officials, party agents, accredited elections observers and election materials such as ballot papers, ballot boxes, etc., before, during and after the polls;

All Parties that have subscribed to this Code shall accept that voters have complete freedom to exercise their franchise in secret without being subjected to any annoyance or obstructions.

A Party that has subscribed to this Code will not:

Procure votes by forcible occupation of polling stations or through illegal activities in the polling stations;

Interfere unjustifiably or in bad faith with the duties of election officials, disturb the process of casting or counting of votes; or

Provide false information to voters in relation to the voting process or in any way attempt to inform voters that their votes will not be secret.

### **SYMBOLS**

A Party that has subscribed to this Code will not:

Imitate the symbols of another Party;

Steal, disfigure or destroy political or campaign materials of another Party; or  
Permit its supporters to do anything prohibited by this section.

### **CAMPAIGN CONDUCT**

No Party that has subscribed to this Code shall indulge in any activity which may create, or aggravate, tension between race, gender, ethnicity, language, class, region or religion.

All Parties that have subscribed to the Code of Conduct shall have the right to present their political principles and ideas without fear of intimidation or threat. However, criticism of other parties, when made, shall be confined to their policies and programmes, past record and work. Parties and candidates shall refrain from unfounded criticism of any aspect of private life, not connected with public activities of the leaders or workers of other parties. Criticism of other parties or their workers based on unverified allegation or distortions shall be avoided.

All Parties that have subscribed to this Code shall respect the rights and freedoms of other political parties to campaign and to disseminate their political ideas and principles without let or hindrance. There shall be equal access to the state media. Journalists who are engaged in their professional activities shall have a free hand to do so without any intimidation.

All Parties, candidates, agents and party entities that have subscribed to this Code shall not obstruct, disrupt, break up or cause to be broken up, meetings or rallies organized by other political parties and candidates; nor should they interrupt or prevent speeches and cause the destruction of handbills, leaflets, and the pasting of posters by other political parties and candidates. However, the posting of these handbills, leaflets, and posters must be with the consent of the owners of the properties.

All Parties that have subscribed to this Code shall in accordance with the Public Order Act of 1965 notify the Inspector General of Police/Paramount Chiefs of any meeting or rally. The Police/Paramount Chief should ensure that no preferential treatment is accorded to one party or particular candidate to the detriment of other parties that have subscribed to this Code of Conduct.

All Parties that have subscribed to this Code of Conduct shall not use state power, privilege or influence or other public resources for campaign purposes.

All Parties that have subscribed to this Code shall desist from coercing or offering pecuniary gains or other kinds of inducements to individuals to vote for or particular party or candidate, or to abstain from voting.

All Parties will refrain from acts of forgery, destruction, fraud, unauthorized removal, or concealment of election materials.

All Parties will respect the secrecy of the ballot and will refrain from any act likely to threaten or compromise said secrecy.

## **INTIMIDATION AND VIOLENCE**

All Parties that subscribe to this Code accept that intimidation, coercion or threatening behaviour, in any form, is unacceptable, and leaders of these parties will direct their officials, candidates, members and supporters not to intimidate or undertake acts of violence against any person at any time.

All Parties that have subscribed to this Code shall ensure that they do not coerce or intimidate Paramount Chiefs or their sub-chiefs, or any other authority to deny any Party the right of access to any chieftom for political functions.

All Parties that have subscribed to this Code shall not raise any private force or militia or use the regular army or other forces to intimidate and gain political or electoral advantage.

## **ACCEPTANCE OF THE OUTCOME OF A FREE AND FAIR ELECTION**

All Parties that have subscribed to this Code will accept the outcome of the election as certified. Should controversy arise, all Parties will submit any grievances to the relevant Courts, the National Electoral Commission or the Political Parties Registration Commission as appropriate and shall accept and comply with the final decisions set down.

## **CAMPAIGN SILENCE PERIOD**

All Parties that have subscribed to this Code shall not make use of the radio/television stations or convene or hold political activity twenty-four hours prior to polling day.

All Parties shall abide by the prohibition on campaigning within four hundred yards of a place of voting on polling day.

No Party which has signed this Code will permit supporters, officials, candidates, members, agents, representatives to undertake any action in contravention of this Code.

## **COMMUNICATION AND MONITORING ADHERENCE TO THE CODE**

All Parties that have subscribed to this Code will make every effort to maintain communications with other Parties that have subscribed to this Code.

Breach of this Code can result in prosecution before the Electoral Offences Court.

All Parties that have subscribed to this Code, civil society and the media shall ensure the dissemination of the issues raised in the Code widely throughout the length and breadth of the country.

## **COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAW**

All Parties that have subscribed to this Code will adhere to existing laws, rules and regulations.

I hereby commit to adhere to the Code of Election Campaign Ethics

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Party/Independent \_\_\_\_\_

Election contesting \_\_\_\_\_ Council/Ward \_\_\_\_\_

Voters' ID Card Number

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Signature

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Date

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