



**INDEPENDENT RADIO NETWORK (IRN) STATEMENT ON THE ELECTIONS**  
**IN SIERRA LEONE**

*Bo, 30 August 2007* --- The following Independent Radio Network press statement on the elections in Sierra Leone was delivered today by Ransford Wright, IRN Coordinator.

Partner radio stations of the 20-strong Independent Radio Network welcome the cooperation afforded to them by members of the public, and especially National Electoral Commission (NEC), the Police, civil society groups and political parties and candidates in the run-up to and following the elections on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August. Without this, our extensive coverage of the elections would not have been possible.

We also wish to say thanks to the people of Sierra Leone. Their general comportment during the polls of August the 11<sup>th</sup>, sets a high standard for other countries to follow.

Our work – that of more than 400 local journalists was made easier than it could have been because of the kindness, respect and courtesy with which they were treated. We urge fellow citizens, of our country Sierra Leone, to offer us the same cordial treatment as we head into the second round of the presidential elections.

Our reporters come from diverse backgrounds and from all walks of life. They represent the myriad faces of our beloved Sierra Leone. In the course of their work, they managed to put aside ethnicity and political allegiances, in order to further our goal during these polls – to provide accurate and impartial information on the elections process, while focusing attention on the need to avoid violence. In the process, we went for inclusive coverage which captured the views and aspirations of all stakeholders, including the often marginalized youth and women voters. Some of our reporters sustained serious injuries in accidents that happened while they were carrying out their work.

The Independent Radio Network acknowledges with humility, the praise and commendations from NEC and National Elections Watch (NEW) media bodies like Sierra Leone Association of Journalist, the Independent Media Commission and Independent Media Monitoring and Refereeing Panel (IMoRP).

We particularly want to acknowledge the support and cooperation we received from NEC. Much of the IRN's Election work was geared towards assisting that organisation in its work. And when the IRN broadcast unofficial voting results ahead of NEC, we were simply trying to fill - in an impartial way - what could have become an information vacuum, with a potential for dangerous rumours.

As we prepare for the presidential run-off, we shall strive to remain steadfast to SLAJ's Media Code of Conduct as well as our own IRN Code of Conduct. We promise the people of Sierra Leone nothing but our best and to remain true to the journalist's code of ethics.

Finally, we kindly urge all political parties, their supporters and sympathetic media to respect the independence and professional integrity of IRN reporters and staff, and to accept us as what we are – The Independent Radio Network.

For more information, please contact: Ransford Wright, IRN Coordinator on 033613313.