



**Press Statement Introducing Elections Situation Room  
Liberia Elections Early Warning & Response Group (LEEWARG)  
West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP-Liberia)  
October 9, 2017**

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press, this Press Conference is about the “Liberia Elections Early Warning and Response Group (LEEWARG) Election Situation Room (LEEWARG ESR)”; a platform which has been set up by the West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP) as one of its contributions to a peaceful electoral process. The LEEWARG Election Situation Room is hosted at the ECOWAS Liaison Office with the kind support of the Austrian Development Agency, Sweden and DANIDA. LEEWARG is a Coordinated Election Observation platform for the 2017 presidential and parliamentary elections of Liberia put in place in collaboration with relevant stakeholders with the primary objective to coordinate and recommend strategies to mitigate threats to the peaceful conduct of the upcoming elections. This process started in April 2017 with the development and validation of a set of elections early warning indicators for the monitoring of violent threats during the October elections in Liberia.

The group is made up of eminent personalities of civil society organizations, security agencies, government and non-governmental institutions, faith-based groups, development partners as well as the media, women and youth groups with a mandate to monitor, deliberate and recommend response strategies to violent threats to the general elections scheduled to be held on October 10, 2017. The situation room is designed to specifically monitor reports, analyze and facilitate responses to violent threats to the peaceful conduct of the legislative and presidential elections scheduled for tomorrow, October 10, 2017, in Liberia.

The Platform will deploy 43 monitors in addition to its institutional accredited observers in prioritized risk areas in the 73 electoral districts across the 15 counties of Liberia. The observers will use a checklist of 66 questions divided into four sections to monitor the voting process in their assigned areas. The reports will be sent to the situation room through phone calls from the situation room to the observers in the field.

**Operationalization of the Situation Room**

Ladies and gentlemen, there will be an operational Election Situation Room (ESR) in Monrovia located at the ECOWAS Liaison Office to facilitate the collation, analysis and response to the reports of the observers. A total of 25 personnel will be working in the ESR. The central coordinating room will comprise of 15 personnel deployed in three sections.

The “Data Gathering Room”, which constitutes the “technical room”, will be responsible for direct communication with observers in the field. They will collate all data received for analysis. They will categorize and map the data in order to inform analysis of identified occurrences that may mar the conduct of elections in risk areas. A total of 5 persons will work in this room. Hot lines for the situation room are 0555 – 022320 & 0777 – 977 167.

The “Analysis Room” is the second section and is responsible for interpreting the data for informed response. There will be a total of 3 experts in this room comprising, political scientists, peace and security experts, and communication experts.

The “Decision Room” comprises of eminent persons who can use their good offices to influence positive response to identified threats. They will comprise the ECOWAS, AU, National Traditional Council, National Civil Society Council of Liberia, Office of the Peace Ambassador of Liberia, Liberia Peace Building Office, the Elections Coordinating Committee and the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia. These persons may be called upon to also engage in preventive diplomacy when the need arises to address escalating tensions.

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of our partners of the Situation Room and WANEP, we wish to thank you for your time and pray that we all do our best to continue to maintain the peace of Liberia after the October 10 Presidential and Legislative Elections.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Ambassador William R. Tolbert III**  
**Co-Chairperson - LEEWARG**