My Vote, My LiFe



SIERRA LEONE CITIZEN'S MANIFESTO 2023

Making the 2023 Elections Meaningful

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INTRODUCING THE CITIZEN'S MANIFESTO 2023

About 3.4 million Sierra Leoneans have registered to vote in the June 2023 elections. However, many citizens have questions about how to make their vote meaningful for their lives in the next five years. Building on its advocacy work initiated in 2018 aimed at making elections meaningful to Sierra Leoneans, the My Vote My Life Movement presents this second iteration of the Citizen's Manifesto (CM) which embodies the hopes and aspirations of citizens to make elections a catalyst for economic and social development.

Sierra Leone voters have a lot on their mind. They want to consolidate the development gains of the last five years as well as address the continued challenges our nation faces. They want to see improved road infrastructure, water services and national cohesion. They want the government to tackle inflation, increase access to food, expand healthcare and create jobs. During the Citizen's Manifesto Steering Committee discussions, we noted that there is a clear opportunity for citizens and political parties to work together on these challenges. Using this June 2023 election to promote development starts with political parties acknowledging the nation's problems and committing to address them.

Funded by the Irish Government, the 2023 CM is based on the views of ordinary citizens including 800 public opinion leaders and 2,400 survey respondents drawn from across all districts of Sierra Leone. Through this Manifesto, citizens hope to have a greater say in the discussions at national and local levels on the quality of leadership and the range of policies and programmes that can move Sierra Leone forward in the next five years and beyond.

Whilst we acknowledge the progress made in consolidating democracy since 2002, we also know that Sierra Leone can do more to make elections meaningful and increase the responsiveness of politicians to the wishes of voters. It is on the basis of this belief that we present the proposals in this CM and implore political parties to consider them when framing their campaign platforms. It is our hope that the proposals in this CM will become part of the wider framework for accountability and monitoring of results in the next administration.

This Manifesto builds on the first one that was developed ahead of the 2018 elections. In that iteration, citizens had seven demands for government. These focused on leadership and included commitments to inclusive politics, political will to fight corruption, and equitable resource distribution. Citizens asked government to ensure at least 40% women's representation, 15% youth representation, and 5% representation of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in parliament. Also demanded was an increase in citizens' share of mineral resources, public asset declaration, transparency in campaign financing, and legal commitment to a series of socio-economic and political targets including right to food and housing. Citizens also wanted equity in distribution of resources and public office appointments, increased social services expenditure in health and education, repeal of the criminal libel law, and increased programming to address environmental damage.

While there was considerable progress on some demands, including increased education expenditure in line with citizens' demands, the passage of a law mandating 30% of nominations of women, and the repeal of the criminal libel law, other demands remain unmet.

We prepared this manifesto bearing in mind the lessons from the 2018 Citizen's Manifesto, both at the level of content as well as implementation. The former focused primarily on reforming political institutions without paying attention to changing attitudes and practices of citizens to create a supportive environment for good governance. Moreover, more attention needs to be paid to the implementation of the promises in the aftermath of elections. In this 2023 Manifesto, while we acknowledge the leadership that political parties can and should provide, they cannot do it alone. This 2023 CM iteration presents twelve policy proposals that include a role for citizens as well. We believe that together, we can work to co-create solutions to the basic needs identified above. It also brings in a few commitments from the 2018 Manifesto that remain unfulfilled, as well as includes a section on tracking these commitments after the new government takes office to ensure accountability.

Our proposals are broadly categorised into two: citizens' demands and citizens' commitments. These include six institutional reforms we want to see political parties commit to, and the next administration adopt, as well as six actions that citizens can take to support the next administration in achieving concrete results. For instance, if political parties adopt measures to build a cohesive nation and traffic policing is effective, the cost of doing business will reduce and national productivity will increase. Equally, when citizens uphold the integrity of public institutions by refusing to pay bribes and not putting undue pressure on public officials such as the police and magistrates when performing their duties, we contribute to making governance work better for all. This is the reciprocal compact we envisage between citizens and their leaders in the 2023 election and the years ahead.

CITIZENS' DEMANDS

Here, we present six demands to political parties for their consideration in the development of their party manifestos.

1. INSTALL TRAFFIC LIGHTS TO REDUCE POLICE PRESENCE ON STREETS

We demand that presidential candidates commit to installing traffic lights to reduce police presence on our streets in the first year after elections. By harnessing the power of technology, we can significantly increase citizens' trust of the police and build a more secure country.



2. ELECTRONIC PAYMENT FOR TRAFFIC OFFENCES OUTSIDE OF THE COURTS

We demand that political parties and presidential candidates commit to adopting a policy that makes payments for traffic offences available via electronic means. This would improve

efficiency of processes, increase revenue from official sources, and reduce the potential for corruption.





3. PUBLISH ASSETS

We demand that presidential and MP candidates commit to publicly declaring their assets and liabilities on or before nomination for the 2023 elections. We believe that this would not only demonstrate a new era of transparent and accountable leadership, but also a commitment to the fight against corruption.



4. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

We demand that political parties commit to achieving 50% employment for young people in both the public and private sectors.



5. EVENLY DISTRIBUTE APPOINTMENTS BY REGION



The next government should evenly distribute political appointments by regions. We recommend that this should not fall below 15% or be above 30% for every region. We urge political parties to ensure that appointments and the sharing of national resources are done in a fair and equitable manner so that no Sierra Leonean feels left out or deprived.

6. PAY PARLIAMENTARY PARTIES



To promote national cohesion and increase cooperation among political parties, we recommend that political parties commit to paying executive members of political parties with seats in parliament from the consolidated fund.

CITIZENS' COMMITMENTS

As citizens, we also commit to taking six actions that promote behaviour change of citizens and improve government effectiveness and service delivery.

1. ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION



We commit to stop throwing rubbish on the streets with immediate effect. As citizens, we are aware of the harmful impacts of environmental pollution including the improper disposal of rubbish and waste. We also commit to fully supporting the enforcement of public sanitation laws.

2. STOP ILLEGAL BUILDING AND BUSH BURNING



We commit to stop building houses in unauthorised locations. We are cognisant of disasters like the mudslide that destroyed lives and property a few years ago. In like manner, we promise to stop indiscriminate bush burning as it destroys biodiversity and can affect lives and property.

3. STOP UNDUE PRESSURE ON POLICE AND JUDICIARY



We shall stop putting undue pressure on judges, police, magistrates and election management bodies (EMBs) and allow the law to take its due course. To ensure we implement this promise effectively, we urge judges, magistrates and the police to be fair and

dispassionate in interpreting the law and punishing offenders.

4. STOP PAYING BRIBES



As responsible citizens, we commit to stop paying bribes to public officials like police, teachers, health workers and tax officials. We know that corruption stops with us.

5. STOP BEGGING POLITICIANS



We commit to stop begging Members of Parliament and other politicians for money, gifts and other personal favours. We are therefore urging them to perform their core responsibilities of legislating, passing laws and improving the governance of state institutions.

6. RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Knowing the destructive effects of hate speech and the power of the internet, as citizens of Sierra Leone, we commit to never use social media to incite ethnic tensions





HOW WE DEVELOPED OUR MANIFESTO

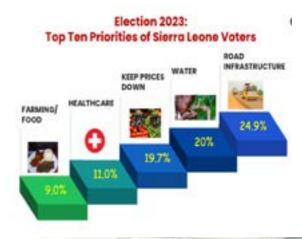
We used the following participatory approaches in developing this Citizen's Manifesto:

A. IDENTIFICATION OF THE ISSUES

The issues presented in this Manifesto were derived from a nationwide Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice (KAP) study conducted by the Institute for Governance Reform (IGR) with funds from Irish Aid. Following the development of the survey

instrument,

representatives of major political parties validated the instrument. Data collection took place in February 2023 across all districts of the country. In all, a total of 2,400 interviews were conducted, with an even 50/50 gender split





split Figure 1: Party leaders reviewing the KAP tool - Feb 2023

between male and female respondents. Enumeration Areas were derived from the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone's 2018 Voter Registration Centre (VRC) data.

B. COORDINATION BY THE STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee drawn from representatives of faith-based organisations, civil society, the media, private sector, and informal groups guided the development of the CM. The Committee has a total composition of 45 members and took responsibility for the overall direction of the CM process, including the schedule for district consultations and media engagements. It was co-chaired by the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone and the National Council of Paramount Chiefs, with the Institute for Governance Reform providing secretariat support. The Committee met a minimum of once a month and held at least eight planning meetings.

C. SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS FOR DISTRICT CONSULTATIONS

To ensure a wide range of views were canvassed, participants for the district consultations were drawn from various sectors of society. In developing the selection criteria, the Steering Committee ensured the following civic leaders were represented in the consultations: religious leaders, professional bodies such as medical staff, teachers, bike riders, keke and motor drivers, farmers association, security officers, and women and youth networks.

D. DISTRICT CONSULTATIONS

In total, we conducted 16 consultative meetings (one per district and two in Western Area). The consultations took place between 21 - 23 March 2023, with facilitators drawn from the Leadership Group and the Steering Committee. Each consultation event had at least 50 participants. At the start of the consultation process, the facilitators presented the KAP Findings, comprising citizens' demands and commitments. The 12 issues were represented by symbols to ensure that even low-literate citizens could effectively participate in all sessions. The issues and their accompanying symbols were displayed on flip charts and participants were asked to score and rank their priorities, from highest to lowest. To avoid elite capture, all results were captured on camera and saved. A mock scoring preceded the main consensus building process. During the mock session, participants were allotted a few ballots to practise voting.

Next, each participant was given a total of 12 ballots, to be split equally between the demands and commitments. After the voting, all ballots were tallied to identify the district position on the issues for consideration. The demands and commitments were then placed in order of priority with each district result captured accordingly. At the end of the exercise, facilitators asked participants if there were specific priorities not captured by the exercise which they strongly felt should be included. All districts raised at least two additional issues that were

added to the district consensus result. This document was then signed by every participant and served as the Manifesto for the district.

A Group photo was taken at the end of the consultation process.



OUR RESOLUTIONS

The resolutions of this manifesto are presented in two ways:

- a. The National Ranking provides a synthesis of the district results, looking at both demands and commitments, and
- b. District Resolutions outline each district-level result, again incorporating demands and commitments with pictorial representation of the resolutions.





Figure 2: Steering Committee planning meeting

TABLE 1. CITIZENS DEMANDS-NATIONAL RANKING

DEMANDS	B 0	B O N	M O Y	P U J	В О М	K A M	T O N	P O R	K A R	F A L	К О І	K E N	K A	K O N	W U	W R	TOTAL
50 % employment for young people	5	1	6	6	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	86
Install traffic lights and reduce police	6	6	5	5	6	6	1	5	5	2	5	5	4	3	6	6	76
Evenly distribute appointments by region	4	2	3	4	3	1	6	3	4	5	3	3	2	4	5	4	56
Publish Assets	1	3	4	1	4	2	4	4	1	3	4	4	5	5	2	2	48
Electronic payment for traffic offences	2	5	2	3	2	4	2	2	2	4	2	4	3	3	4	1	45
Pay parliamentary party executives	3	4	1	2	1	3	3	1	3	1	1	2	1	2	3	3	34

TABLE 2. CITIZENS COMMITMENTS-NATIONAL RANKING

COMMITMENTS	В	В	М	Р	В	К	т	Р	К	F	К	К	К	К	w	w	TOTAL
	0	O N	О Y	J	O M	A M	O N	O R	A R	A L	0	E N	A	0 N	U	R	
		IN	T	,	IVI	IVI	IN	N	N	_	•	IN	'	IN			
Environmental sanitation	6	6	4	6	6	6	5	6	6	2	6	4	6	6	6	6	81
Stop unauthorised building and bush burning	5	5	5	3	4	5	1	2	1	1	4	6	5	4	2	6	59
Stop bribery	4	1	1	4	5	4	4	1	4	5	5	5	3	4	3	6	59
Stop pressure on police and judiciary	3	3	3	1	3	2	2	5	5	4	2	3	4	5	5	5	55
Commit to responsible use of social media	2	4	1	5	1	1	6	4	3	6	3	1	1	2	4	4	48
Stop begging for gifts and personal favours	3	2	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	2	3	4	3	42

DISTRICT RESOLUTIONS

BO DISTRICT

The people of Bo prioritised the reduction of police on the streets, employment of young

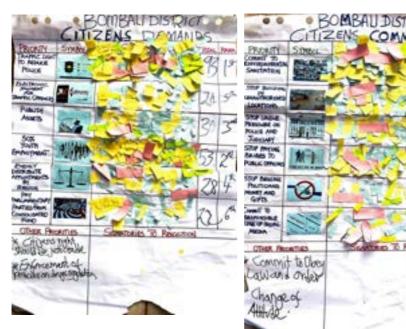
people and even distribution



of high-level public sector appointments as their key demands ahead of the 2023 elections. On their part, citizens committed environmental sanitation, resolved to not throw rubbish on the streets nor build houses in unauthorised locations. Perhaps as a sign of the depreciation of the local currency, they identified control of the exchange as an important additional demand.

BOMBALI DISTRICT

Bombali District is the heartland of the main opposition All Peoples Congress and was one of the hotspots for the August 10 protests of last year (2022). The most important demand for Bombali is the installation of traffic lights to reduce police presence on the streets, followed

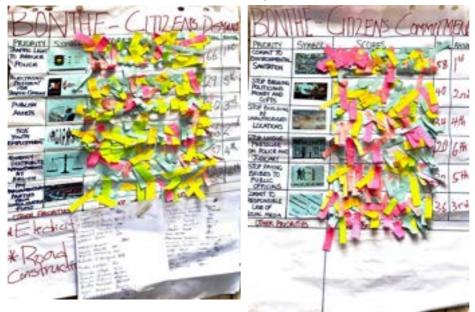


by 50% youth employment and asset publication. Citizens on their part are committed to environmental sanitation and not engaging in bribery.

Citizens also want government to enforce policies on drug regulation.

BONTHE DISTRICT

The birthplace of the current President, Bonthe was one of the more deprived districts during the last administration. Their most important demands include reduction of the presence of



traffic officials on the streets. increasing employment opportunities for young people and asset publication by politicians. On their part, the people are committed environmental sanitation. and refraining from asking personal favours from politicians.

Additional demands include the provision of reliable electricity and improving the road network in the district.

MOYAMBA DISTRICT

Rutile mineral-rich Moyamba District chose youth employment, reducing police presence on





the streets and asset publication as its top three demands. On the side of commitments, the people committed are responsible use of social media and to stop bush burning and constructing unauthorised settlements. Other demands close to their hearts are improvements in the road network and the provision of potable water.

FALABA DISTRICT

Along with Karene, Falaba is one of the new districts that came into being following the redistricting of the country in August 2017. As such, it lags behind most of its counterparts in terms of basic amenities. The people of Falaba are demanding increased employment opportunities for young people, equitable distribution of appointments to ensure no region or district is unfairly disadvantaged and making payments for traffic offences electronically. Aware of the social contract between the citizens and the governed, they are committed to



refraining from using social media to spread hate and to not bribing officials. Other key demands people of Falaba are making are. unsurprisingly, an improved road network and the provision of clean water.

KARENE DISTRICT

As one of the relatively newer districts christened towards the conclusion of the Koroma presidency, Karene District remains one of the most-challenged districts when it comes to social amenities and economic opportunities. As such, 50% employment for young people



took centre stage in the rankings, followed by a reduction in police presence on the streets and even regional distribution of appointments. Karene wants good road network and government to address deforestation.

KOINADUGU DISTRICT

In keeping with the youth employment theme, the people of Koinadugu have opted for 50%

employment for young people,



the reduction of police from the streets and asset publication as their three demands of the 2023 ahead elections. In turn, they committed have keeping their environment clean. along with refraining from paying bribes. Other demands are increased investments in agriculture and electricity supply.

KAMBIA DISTRICT

Kambia District prioritised a reduction in police presence on the streets, increased employment for youths and making electronic payments for traffic offences. They are





committing themselves environmental sanitation and stopping unauthorised building, along with indiscriminate bush burning. Other key demands are improvement in the road network and provision of electricity, which is no surprise for a district noted for its lack of access to the power grid.

KAILAHUN DISTRICT

Being the district in which the first shots of the war were fired in the early 1990s, Kailahun is one of the strongholds of the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party. This did not however stop the people of Kailahun from taking a cue from the rest of the country in placing youth employment centre stage as their foremost demand of the next administration. In a nod to accountable governance, their next key demand is asset publication, followed by reduced



Citizens, on the other hand, are committing themselves to environmental sanitation and adherence to building regulations. Additional citizen demands include provision of potable water, town and district planning and improving feeder roads.

KENEMA DISTRICT



The top three demands of citizens in Kenema are empowering young people for employment opportunities, installing traffic lights to minimise police presence on streets and asset publication. Citizens are committed to stop building in unauthorised locations like the Kamboi Hills catchment area, to stop

paying bribes and promote environmental sanitation. Additional demands include road infrastructure, pipe borne water and fully equipped Kenema district hospital.

KONO DISTRICT

The citizens of diamond-rich Kono district voted overwhelmingly for youth employment, followed by asset publication and equitable distribution of appointments. The top two





commitments are environmental sanitation and undue stopping pressure on police, judges magistrates. Other include priorities agriculture and food security and pipe-borne water.

TONKOLILI DISTRICT

The people of Tonkolili have opted for equity in the distribution of appointments as their topmost demand for the next administration. This is closely followed by the provision of increased employment opportunities for young people and asset publication by aspiring candidates. In what is perhaps an acknowledgment of the dangers of using social media to



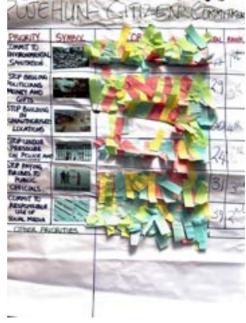


hate spread and disinformation, they have committed themselves to using social media responsibly, followed by keeping their environment in a and livable responsible Additional condition. demands include increasing political tolerance and for government to harmonise salaries in the public sector.

PUJEHUN DISTRICT

Like many of their counterparts, the top three demands for Pujehun District are youth employment, reducing police presence on the streets and promoting an equitable distribution of appointments on a regional basis. On their part, citizens of the district are committed to keeping their environment free of garbage and responsibly using social media. Other citizen





demands are for the the next administration to attention improvements in the health sector and enhancing vocational educational institutions for the

development middle-level human resource needs of Sierra Leone.

PORT LOKO DISTRICT

Like many other areas of the country, Port Loko District is demanding increased employment opportunities for young people, police reduction on the streets, and asset publication by the next administration as well as for aspiring leaders. Ordinary citizens are committed to





environmental sanitation and ensuring that they refrain from putting undue pressure on police, judges and magistrates, allowing them to do their jobs. In addition, they want to see a review of Sierra Leone's international trade agreements and our borders, reflecting their position as a key entry point into the country.

WESTERN RURAL

The Installation of traffic lights to reduce police presence on the roads, followed by youth employment and a more even distribution of appointments are the top demands of the people of Western Rural. On their part, they are committed to environmental sanitation, stopping





bribery and building of structures and homes in unauthorised areas. Similar to participants from Greater Freetown, they wish to see price reductions of basic commodities like rice, flour and sugar through the introduction of duty-free imports, as well as an appreciation of the value of the local currency.

WESTERN URBAN

The Western Area remains Sierra Leone's largest city and seat of government. It is no surprise that Freetown's top demands are the installation of traffic lights to reduce police on the streets and 50% employment opportunities for young people. These are followed by making





traffic offences. Their foremost commitments environmental are sanitation and stopping the pressure on judges, magistrates and police. In a nod to rising food costs exacerbated by global economic conditions, they are additionally demanding more investments in agriculture and the enactment of price controls.

HOW DO WE WISH TO MONITOR THESE DEMANDS AND COMMITMENTS?

We will develop a comprehensive costed action plan to implement this Manifesto. Our action plan will cover seven broad areas:

- I. Align demands and commitments with party manifestos: The Steering Committee will convene special sessions with political party leaders to canvass support for the CM.
- Align with government priorities and GoSL budget: We note that following the
 election, the next administration will develop a new development plan. We will engage
 with GOSL and donor partners to integrate the CM commitment in the plan and
 budget. The Steering Committee will also fundraise for the CM activities through
 private donations.
- 3. Establish district committees or use existing structures: The CM Steering Committee will establish or work with functional district committees to serve as oversight mechanisms that will work with local decentralised bodies on achieving the commitments. Special emphasis will be placed on the six commitments of citizens. District committees will work with local authorities on enforcing bye-laws on sanitation, and non-payment of bribes to public officials.
- 4. Integrate the CM into Local Council work plans: The Steering Committee will also engage the new local council chairs and mayors on integrating CM results into the new local development plans. Specifically, the district committees will lead the engagement at the district and chiefdom levels.



STEERING COMMITTEE

- 1 50/50 Group Sierra Leone
- 2 Academic Staff Association
- 3 Action Aid Sierra Leone
- 4 Ahmed Tejan Kabba Foundation
- 5 All Stars Record
- 6 Artists for Peace
- 7 AYV Radio and Television
- 8 Budget Advocacy Network
- 9 Campaign for Good Governance
- 10 Center for Accountability and the Rule of Law
- 11 Center for Coordination of Youth Activities
- 12 Center for Democracy and Human Rights
- 13 Citizens Advocacy Network
- 14 Council of Churches in Sierra Leone
- 15 Flaming Evangelical Ministries
- 16 Green Scenery Sierra Leone
- 17 Independent Radio Network
- 18 Inter-Religious Council Sierra Leone
- 19 Market Women Association
- 20 Media Reform Coordination Group
- 21 National Advocacy Coalition on Extractives
- 22 National Elections Watch
- 23 National Union of Sierra Leone Students
- 24 Native Consortium
- 25 Network Movement for Justice and Development
- 26 Pentecostal Fellowship Sierra Leone
- 27 Power Women 232
- 28 Premier Media
- 29 Radio Democracy 98.1 FM
- 30 Reporter's Union
- 31 Sierra Leone Association of Journalists
- 32 Sierra Leone Bar Association
- 33 Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation
- 34 Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce
- 35 Sierra Leone Commercial Bike Riders Union
- 36 Sierra Leone Market Women's Association
- 37 Sierra Leone Union on Disability Issues
- 38 Sky Radio
- 39 Society for Democratic Initiatives
- 40 Sweizzy Jewellers Association
- 41 Talking Drum Studios
- 42 United Muslim Organization
- 43 Women in the Media
- 44 Women's Forum Sierra Leone