![SierraPoll — QUALITY DECISIONS REQUIRE QUALITY DATA]
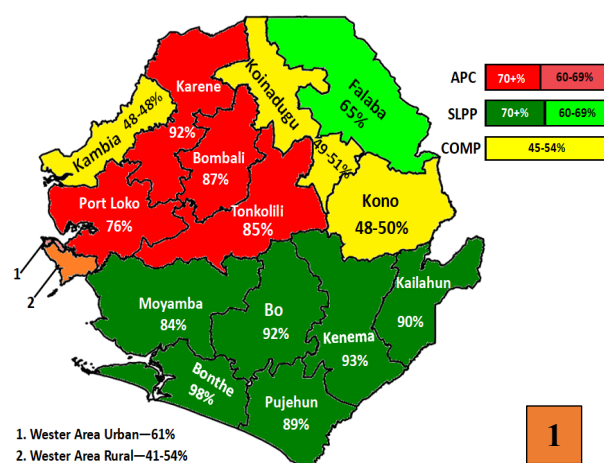
June 14, 2023

# Ten Days to Election: A Forecast of Sierra Leone's Presidential and General Election Results

Out of a list of 13 aspiring candidates for Sierra Leone's 2023 presidential elections, President Julius Maada Bio is projected to receive 56% of all votes followed by his main challenger, Dr. Samura Mathew Wilson Kamara who is projected to receive 43% of the vote, according to a new SierraPoll survey released today. This forecast is consistent with the findings of a June 2022 AfroBarometer survey in which 53% of Sierra Leoneans said that they trust the president "somewhat" or "a lot.". Bio's poll result is slightly above the minimum 55% threshold required to avoid a presidential runoff.

The electoral landscape has changed considerably since the last SierraPoll forecast of 29th May especially in swing areas of Kono, Kambia, Falaba and the Western Rural districts. It is possible that further shifts can occur as the campaign draws to a close in the coming days. We present this final forecast of the four-tier races utilising this latest SierraPoll data that illustrates shifting voter preferences in the districts as well as our knowledge of the ground-game that political parties have employed in successive elections. The main forecasts are:
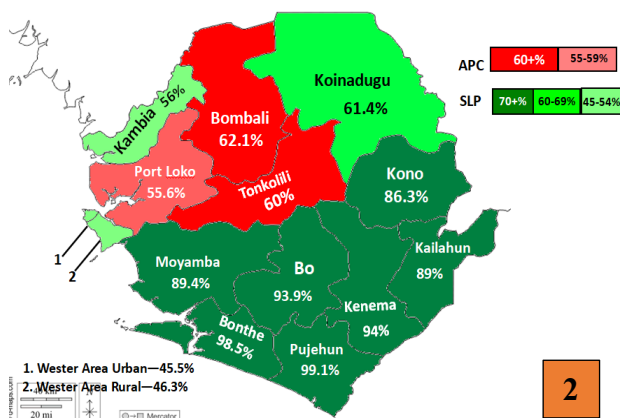
1. With an 11.9% threshold to win a seat in parliament under the new PR system, we forecast an entirely two-party parliament come June 24th. In Kambia, it appears that a good number of NGC voters have shifted to SLPP reducing the chances that a minority party will be able to get seats in the next parliament.

2. The 2023 electoral map appears to gradually mirror the political map of 2002, the last election when the PR system was used. See figures 1 and 2.

3. SLPP is projected to form the majority in parliament with 75 to 82 seats (56-61% of elected MPs), followed by APC with 51-60 seats (39-44%), see Table 1.

4. Women are projected to make up between 26 and 30% of directly elected MPs in parliament.

5. With Kambia, Koinadugu, Kono and Western Rural becoming competitive districts, SLPP is projected to take between 13-15 of the 22 local councils, while APC is tipped to take 7-9 local and municipal bodies.

6. Seven local councils in Koinadugu, Falaba, Kambia, Kono, Western Rural and Western urban will have a significant share of opposition councillors. We reiterate the point made in May, that for

### Sierra Leone June 2023: Presidential Election Forecast
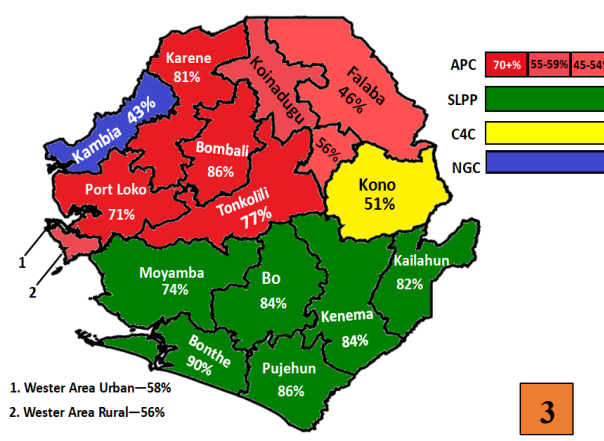


1. Wester Area Urban—61%
2. Wester Area Rural—41-54%

### Sierra Leone's Electoral Map 2002



1. Wester Area Urban—45.5%
2. Wester Area Rural—46.3%

### Sierra Leone's Electoral Map 2018



1. Wester Area Urban—58%
2. Wester Area Rural—56%

effective local governance in these competitive councils, the next set of mayors and district council chairs should consider adopting cross-party and inclusive approaches in managing service delivery.

**Table 1: A Forecast of the Composition of the Next Parliament**

| DISTRICT | SierraPoll results for Parliament | | | Share of Parties in parliament | | Forecast for women MPs June 2023 | | | To No of MPs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | APC | SLPP | Others | APC | SLPP | APC | SLPP | Total | |
| BO | 7% | 92% | 0% | 0 | 12 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 12 |
| BOMBALI | 87% | 13% | 0% | 7 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 8 |
| BONTHE | 2% | 98% | 0% | 0 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| FALABA | 31% | 65% | 4% | 1-2 | 2-3 | 0 | 1 | 0-1 | 4 |
| KAILAHUN | 10% | 90% | 0% | 0-1 | 9-10 | 0 | 3-4 | 3-4 | 10 |
| KAMBIA | 48% | 48% | 4% | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| KARENE | 92% | 8% | 0% | 4-5 | 0-1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| KENEMA | 7% | 93% | 0% | 0 | 12 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 12 |
| KOINADUGU | 51% | 49% | 0% | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| KONO | 48% | 50% | 2% | 4-5 | 5-6 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 10 |
| MOYAMBA | 14% | 84% | 2% | 1 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| PORT LOKO | 76% | 24% | 0% | 7-8 | 2-3 | 2 | 0-1 | 2-3 | 10 |
| PUJEHUN | 11% | 89% | 0% | 0-1 | 6 | 0 | 1-2 | 1-2 | 7 |
| TONKOLILI | 85% | 14% | 1% | 8-9 | 1-2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 10 |
| WESTERN RURAL | 54% | 41% | 4% | 5-6 | 4-5 | 1-2 | 1 | 2-3 | 10 |
| WESTERN URBAN | 61% | 34% | 3% | 9-11 | 5-6 | 3-4 | 1-2 | 4-5 | 16 |
| TOTAL PARLIAMENT | 43% | 56% | 1% | 51-60 | 75-82 | 13-15 | 22-25 | 35-40 | 135 |
| Projected % in Parliament | | | | 39-44% | 56-61% | | 26-30% | | |

**Table 2: Forecast for Local Council Chairpersons, Mayors and Councillors**

| District | SierraPoll Results for Mayor and Chairpersons | | SierraPoll Results for Local Councilors | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | APC | SLPP | APC | SLPP | Others |
| Bo District Council - Chairperson | 1.6% | 98.4% | 3% | 97% | 0% |
| Bo City - Mayor | 0.8% | 99.2% | 9% | 91% | 0% |
| BOMBALI District - Chairperson | 82.7% | 17.3% | 81.7% | 18.3% | 0% |
| BONTHE District - Chairperson | 1.8% | 98.2% | 3% | 97% | 0% |
| BONTHE MUNICIPAL - Mayor | 1.8% | 98.2% | 1% | 99% | 0% |
| FALABA District Chairperson | 29.2% | 66.7% | 31% | 65% | 4% |
| Freetown City - Mayor | 56% | 44% | 64% | 26% | 2% |
| Kailahun District - Chairperson | 6.5% | 92.7% | 11% | 89% | 0% |
| KAMBIA District - Chairperson | 49.0% | 50.0% | 48% | 50% | 2% |
| KARENE District - Chairperson | 91.8% | 8.2% | 93% | 8% | 0% |
| KENEMA City- Mayor | 6.3% | 94.3% | 10% | 90% | 0% |
| KENEMA District - Chairperson | 6.3% | 93.7% | 7% | 93% | 0% |
| Koidu City - Mayor | 47.0% | 50.0% | 42% | 56% | 4% |
| KOINADUGU – Chairperson | 50.0% | 49.0% | 41% | 49% | 10% |
| KONO District - Chairperson | 50.0% | 48.0% | 50% | 46% | 4% |
| MAKENI City - Mayor | 82.6% | 17.4% | 82% | 17% | 1% |
| MOYAMBA District - Chairperson | 15.4% | 81.5% | 14% | 85% | 0% |
| PORT LOKO City - Mayor | 74.1% | 25.9% | 72% | 26% | 2% |
| PORT LOKO District - Chairperson | 79.1% | 16.4% | 76% | 24% | 0% |
| PUJEHUN District- Chairperson | 7.5% | 92.5% | 10% | 90% | 0% |
| TONKOLILI District - Chairperson | 90.1% | 9.9% | 84% | 15% | 0% |
| WESTERN RURAL - Chairperson | 50.0% | 47.4% | 54% | 41% | 2% |
| TOTAL | 40.2% | 59.1% | 44% | 53% | 2% |

## Is the 4 for 4 Syndrome Holding? Understanding Voter Dynamics in Freetown

In a head-to-head matchup between former Major Aki-Sawyerr and SLPP's Gento Kamara, Aki-Sawyerr leads 56 – 44 percent among registered voters in Freetown and the environs around the City's peninsular area. Since 2007, Freetown has largely voted APC and Aki-Sawyerr was tipped to retake the City Council in the last two SierraPolls and is still leading the race. However, Gento Kamara recorded a 5 percentage-point increase since the last SierraPoll in May and is polling way above all SLPP candidates vying for Freetown positions. Samura Kamara is also polling above the APC Mayoral candidate by 6% while SLPP's Gento polls 10% above SLPP's Presidential candidate Maada Bio. This variance within parties clearly points to a degree of cross-party voting. Meaning, a fair share of Freetonains are not voting a 'straight ticket' (4 for 4), that is, voting for one party in all four positions down the ballot.

To understand this fluidity of voters, SierraPoll tested the tolerance of voters for opposing parties. Respondents were asked if the elections were held today which party would they not vote for at all for president, mayor, parliament, and local councillor. Unsurprisingly, the data reveals Freetown as the district experiencing the highest level of crossvoting compared to the rest of the country (see Tables 3 and 4 and figures 4 and 5.) For instance, while only 10% of Samura's supporters say they cannot vote for APC mayoral candidates in districts across the country, approximately 30% say they cannot vote for APC's mayoral candidate in Freetown (Table 3). Equally, at least 25-30% of SLPP's Gento Kamara supporters say they are not willing to vote for the parliamentary, mayoral and councillor candidates put forward by the SLPP. The venn diagram (figure 4) also clearly shows how Gento voters are split 70-30 between his party's presidential candidate Bio and his opponent APC-Samura-Kamara.

| Table 3: Crossvoting in Freetown between presidential candidates and other positions | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Candidates of choice | % of Bio and Samura Kamara voters who will not vote the same party in other positions. | | | | | |
| | Parliament | | Mayor | | Councillor | |
| | National | Freetown | National | Freetown | National | Freetown |
| SLPP – Julius Maada Bio | 8% | 8% | 8% | 12% | 8% | 8% |
| APC – Samura Kamara | 8% | 22% | 10% | 30% | 7% | 19% |

### Cross-party Voting Between Gento-Kamara and APC/SLPP Presidential Aspirants



Distribution of Gento Kamara Voters among APC/SLPP presidential aspirants

Mohamed Gento-Kamara

SLPP's HE Julius Maada-Bio

SLPP Mayor

70%     30%

SLPP Presidential Aspirant     0%     APC President Aspirant
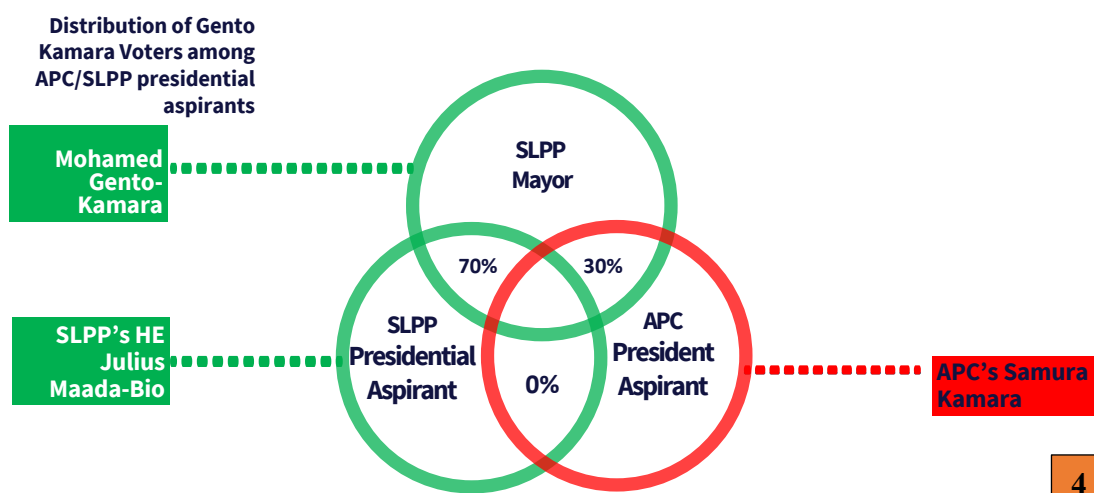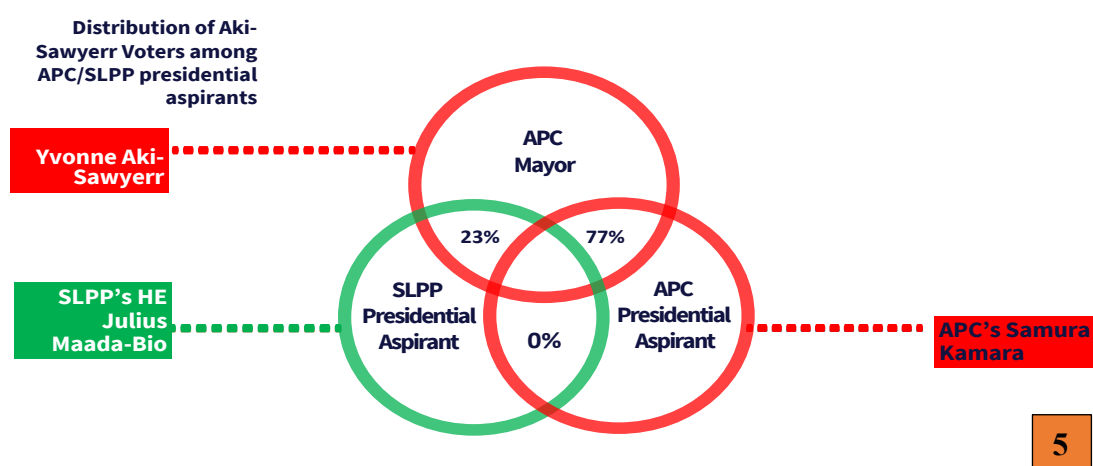
APC's Samura Kamara

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Figure 5 and Table 4 also show a similar trend of crossvoting between SLPP and Mayor Aki-Sawyerr. Nearly a quarter (23%) of voters say they are casting their ballot for Aki-Sawyerr and Bio. It is essential to note that Samura/Gento's supporters are 7% more likely to support crossvoting than Bio/Aki-Sawyerr. These variations in levels of tolerance of party supporters for different candidates in Sierra Leone's four-tier presidential and general elections will continue to shape the race as Freetown heads to the polls next week.

| Table 4: Crossvoting in Freetown between mayoral candidates and other positions | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Candidate | % of Aki-Sawyerr and Gento Kamara voters who will not vote the same party in other positions. | | |
| | President | Parliament | Councillor |
| Mayor Aki-Sawyerr | 23% | 24% | 21% |
| Mohamed Gento Kamara | 25% | 30% | 27% |

**Cross-party Voting Between Aki-Sawyerr and APC/SLPP Presidential Aspirants**



**5**

**Methodology**

- *Interview dates:* June 8th – 12th, 2023
- *Respondents:* Registered voters (12%- first time voters, 44% are 23-35yrs, 29% are 36-55yrs and 15% are 56yrs and above
- *Sampling:* This study broadly categorized respondents into the country's 16 district blocks that form the constituencies under the new proportional representation system. A two-phase sampling approach was employed: A) Phase One: we utilized ECSL's data base of 3,360 voter registration centers (VRCs) to randomly select 245 VRCs. A VRC serves as a polling centre on polling day. B) Phase Two: random selection of registered voters. Once the VRCS were selected, the second stage involved selecting targeted respondents. The method involved randomly selecting 10 voters from 10 households within the VRC catchment area. The median number of voters per VRC is 691, with the majority of 2023 VRCs ranging between 181 and 4,400 voters. VRCs in urban areas tend to be larger. Within each constituency, individual VRCs were selected using probability proportional to size (this ensured that each registered voter within a district had approximately the same probability of being selected).
- *Number of respondents: 2,448*
- *Margin of error ±1.98% (adjusted for weighting) at 95% confidence interval*
- *Data collection mode: face to face interviews/ boots on the ground*
- *Number of questions: 17*
- *Number of questions not reported: 3*