

ELECTIONS WATCH

THE GAMBIA

Elections Watch Committee (EWC) 2023 Pre-Elections Observation (PREO)

Local Government Elections (Mayors/ Chairmans) 2023

NOMINATION UPDATE – #2 (28th April to 3rd May 2023)

The Election Watch Committee (EWC) is a partnership of 7 organizations with different expertise and background – Peace Ambassadors-The Gambia (PAG), ACTIVISTA, National Youth Parliament (NYP), Think Young Women (TYW), Beakanyang, Peace Hub – The Gambia (PHTG), and The Gambia Federation of the Disabled (GFD) – collaborating to observe the electoral processes in The Gambia. The EWC’s observation of the 2023 Local Government elections will build on the EWC’s observation of the 2021 Presidential election, including the Voter Registration process, the display of a provisional list of voters, the candidate nomination and campaign period, the 2021 presidential election day and as well the 2022 National Assembly elections. Ahead of the April 15 Local Government elections, the EWC has observed the candidate nomination process and will observe the campaign period.

Summary

The Elections Watch Committee (EWC) has trained and deployed a total of fourteen (14) long-term observers, i.e. 2 observers in each administrative region to observe the nomination process within The Gambia. The nomination period ran from 27th April - 3rd May 2023. as indicated by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). This update contains observation findings from the candidate nomination process covering the period of the nomination exercise. The update also contains information as reported by observers on the IEC preparedness, the conduct of aspiring candidates as well as recommendations. The EWC will continue to observe the campaign period and will submit a final campaign update at the close of the process.

Methodology

The Election Watch Committee deployed a total of fourteen long-term observers fourteen i.e. two (2) observers for each region observing on alternating days to monitor the conduct of the local government Mayoral and chairperson candidate nomination in their respective regions. All Election Watch observers were carefully selected and thoroughly trained, and accredited by the IEC.

All Elections Watch observers were instructed to observe the nomination activities within The Gambia. Observers were trained to observe nomination activities and send in reports on each observation day during the nomination period, as well as report critical incidents when necessary.

For the mayoral nomination period, each observer sent in their observation report using a comprehensive checklist via coded text message using their mobile phones to the Election Watch Committee National Information Center (EWC-NIC). The data management platform we use is called Apollo, which serves as a

data management system designed to support citizen election observation and other large-scale structured data collection using field observation. For the mayoral nomination period, each observer sent in their observation report using a comprehensive checklist via coded text message through utilizing their mobile devices to the EWC National Information Center (NIC). This data was sent on Apollo and later analyzed by our technical team.

The EWC also trained one (1) data entry clerk that was stationed at the EWC National Information Center in Kanifing to collect checklist reports and critical incident forms from observers on the reporting days.

NOMINATION OBSERVATION FOR THE MAYORAL AND CHAIRPERSON ELECTIONS FINDINGS

These findings are based on the 42 reports received from the EWC's nomination observers. This total is because we have six (6) nomination days where EWC observers send in reports and the last day which is the seven (7) day is usually a correction day for nominees hence observers did not send in any reports.

Nominations:

The IEC conducted the candidate nomination process from Thursday, April 27th to Wednesday, May 3rd 2023 in each of its seven regional offices. Political parties were assigned specific days on which their candidates submitted their nomination packages. On Thursday, April 27, 2023. The IEC released a list of 32 candidates that have been cleared to contest the 20th May, 2023 for the Mayoral and Chairpersons polls. No candidate was rejected by the IEC during the nomination period.

Based on the IEC's list of candidates, the highest number of candidates are in Brikama, Kerewan and Janjanbureh Administrative Area with 11, 4 and 4 candidates running in each region, respectively. Independent candidates fielded the largest number of candidates at 11 followed by the NPP and UPP each with 8 candidates. The EWC notes a low number of female candidates running in these elections as only 2 of the 32 candidates are women.

**IEC'S OFFICIAL RESULTS ON NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR
MAYORAL/CHAIRPERSON ELECTION**

BANJUL CITY COUNCIL

NO	NAME	GENDER	PARTY
1	EBOU FAYE	M	NPP
2	ROHEYATOU LOWE	F	UDP

KANIFING MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

NO	NAME	GENDER	PARTY
1	BAKARY Y. BADJIE	M	NPP
2	TALIB AHMED BENSOU DA	M	UDP
3	PA MODOU JAINABA MBOWE	M	INDEPENDENT

BRIKAMA AREA COUNCIL

NO	NAME	GENDER	PARTY
1	YANKUBA BARROW	M	INDEPENDENT
2	LAMIN JAMMEH	M	INDEPENDENT
3	AMADOU MUHTAR CHAM	M	INDEPENDENT
4	SEEDY SHERIFF CEESAY	M	NPP
5	JAINABA BAH	F	PPP
6	YANKUBA DARBOE	M	UDP
7	SALIEU JALLOW	M	INDEPENDENT
8	AHMADOU GITTEH	M	INDEPENDENT
9	BAKARY SAIBOU SANNEH	M	INDEPENDENT
10	IBRAHIM J.S. SANNEH	M	INDEPENDENT
11	BAISEY SAWO	M	INDEPENDENT

KEREWAN AREA COUNCIL

NO	NAME	GENDER	PARTY
1	ABDOULIE JALLOW	M	GDC
2	PAPA TUNKARA	M	NPP
3	MALAMIN I.L. BOJANG	M	UDP
4	BABOU KEBBEH	M	INDEPENDENT

MANSAKONKO AREA COUNCIL

NO	NAME	GENDER	PARTY
1	KEBBA DEM	M	NPP
2	LANDING B. SANNEH	M	UDP

JANJANBUREH AREA COUNCIL

NO	NAME	GENDER	PARTY
1	HARUNA BARRY	M	GDC
2	SULAYMAN SAWANEH	M	NPP
3	MALICK SOWE	M	UDP
4	ALHAGIE A.S. BOYE	M	INDEPENDENT

KUNTAUR AREA COUNCIL

NO	NAME	GENDER	PARTY
1	ABDOULIE KEITA	M	GFA
2	SAIHOU JAWARA	M	NPP
3	ALHAGI S.B. SILLAH	M	UDP

BASSE AREA COUNCIL

NO	NAME	GENDER	PARTY
1	MAHAMADOU CEESAY	M	NPP
2	ALHAGIE KARAMO TOURAY	M	PDOIS
3	FODAY DANJO	M	UDP

BREAKDOWN OF CANDIDATES PER POLITICAL PARTY

Political Party	# of Approve Candidates
GDC	2
GFA	1
NPP	8
PDOIS	1
PPP	1

UDP	8
IND.	11
Grand Total	32

Elections Watch Committee (EWC) Observers deployed to the 7 regional offices submitted 42 reports over the 6-day candidate nomination period. 37 of 42 observer reports indicated that the IEC regional offices had opened by 10:00am. 5 of 42 Elections Watch Committee Observers' reports indicated that the IEC offices opened after 10:00am. And in 1 instance, the IEC regional office was not open to accepting nominations as no aspirants from the political parties assigned to that day had previously collected the nomination form. Security agents were present at the regional offices on nearly all days of the nomination process (40 of 42 EWC observer reports).

Elections Watch Committee Observers were asked to observe whether aspirants submitted a complete nomination package and whether the IEC followed procedures in either accepting or rejecting their nominations. However, in many instances, the IEC confirmed receipt of the nomination package and later called the candidate to return to collect their acceptance of the nomination. Due to this, Elections Watch Committee Observers were not able to fully observe how the IEC reviewed these packages or if candidates were asked to make corrections to their nomination packages. EWC observers noted that no objections were made to candidate nominations in 42 out of 42 reports.

EWC Observers reported that all candidates were given a copy of the 'Acceptance of Nomination Forms' after the completion of their nomination process.

The candidate nomination process was generally peaceful with no major instances of violence and disruption.

Elections Watch Committee Observers noted in 16 out of 42 reports that regional offices closed the nomination process on time (by 4:00 pm), with 27 out of 42 reports indicating that the process closed before 4:30 pm.

REPORTING AND COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR THE CAMPAIGN OBSERVATION EFFORTS

EWC observers will observe and report on campaign processes such as political rallies, campaign marches, demonstrations, debates, the use of the media, flyers, posters, billboards, and community outreach events. They will also watch out for campaign violence within their assigned areas such as the propagation of hate speeches and divisive messages, intimidation, and harassment targeted at electoral actors and other groups. Observers will further report on civic and voters' education activities as well as the IEC preparatory activities for Election Day at the regional and constituency levels.

For the Pre-Election Period (Candidate Nomination and Campaign), EWC will issue two public

reports to communicate its observation findings. These updates will be in the form of a report that will be shared through a Press Conference and as well directly sent via emails to various stakeholders to communicate the EWC’s findings.

This initial update covers the EWC Candidate Nomination Observation and Campaign Deployment Strategy will be followed by one additional update. The EWC’s update will communicate the candidates campaign period as well as the EWC Deployment Strategy for the Election Day Observation. All EWC Campaign reports will be based on the direct observations from EWC’s 14 long-term observers located in the seven (7) administrative regions of the country.

In addition to the Campaign Update, EWC will immediately share with the appropriate authorities any verified critical incident reports or any other relevant information so that actions would immediately be taken to address the issue(s).

To communicate its observation findings, the EWC will hold two press briefings/conferences on the two updates which will also be shared with the IEC, members of the media, and major electoral stakeholders. Throughout the campaign period, there will also be regular posts of EWC activities on its social media page and official website for the public to access.

ANNEX A:

NOMINATION OBSERVERS DEPLOYMENT BREAKDOWN

The EWC had a total of fourteen (14) persons on the standby observer team to monitor the nomination of candidates, with two (2) persons in each region. One (1) stationary observer station was at each regional IEC nomination center on alternating days.

REGION	NO. OF REGIONAL OBSERVERS
Banjul	2
Kanifing	2
West Coast Region	2
North Bank Region	2
Lower River Region	2
Central River Region	2
Upper River Region	2
TOTAL	14

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