The National Security Coordinator Reactivates the Integrated Elections Security Planning Committee

The National Security Coordinator (NS Coord) of the Office of National Security (ONS), Abdulai Caulker has reactivated the Integrated Elections Security Planning Committee (IESPC) to plan and coordinate security for all formal elections (General Elections, Paramount Chief elections, Political Parties' lower-level elections, etc.) across the country.

By a National Security Council (NSC) directive of 2012, the IESPC was established to provide a framework within which security sector institutions can be prepared and resourced to perform elections security-related duties with professionalism, gender sensitivity, impartiality and credibility, thereby ensuring a safe and secured environment for all. The IESPC has since coordinated security for three (3) general elections: 2012, 2018 and 2023.

Mandated to be chaired by the NS Coord, the IESPC is normally activated immediately after the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone (ECSL) announces the date for the country's general elections, which leaves the committee with little time to undertake all its activities. The early activation of the committee therefore, was to give the Elections Security Body enough time to plan and coordinate security for the forthcoming general elections and other formal elections in the country.

Upon its activation on Wednesday, 2nd July 2025, the IESPC held its maiden meeting at the Office of National Security (ONS) to bring stakeholders together to discuss the committee's broad mandate and chart a way forward. The Chairman of the committee, the NS Coord envisions the IESPC as a permanent feature that is operational throughout the electoral cycles.

The IESPC is a multi-sectoral body comprising members from the security sector, Elections Management Bodies (EMBs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and development partners as technical advisers.

Key decisions reached by members include, reviewing lessons learnt from past elections, develop and rollout capacity building programmes for security personnel to enhance professionalism, and conduct threat assessment to guide the development of operational plans and deployment of resources.

The maiden meeting ended on a very high note of optimism.

The committee will continue to meet fortnightly and report to the National Security Council Coordinating Group (NSCCG), the second highest security committee after the NSC.

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