

***Monrovia, Liberia, December 8 (Infosplusgabon) - The two parties that protested the 10 October Liberian presidential and representative polls have reacted differently to the decision of the Supreme Court upholding the outcome of the election and ordering a run-off for the presidency.***

The Court on Thursday lifted its prohibition and ordered the National Elections Commission (NEC) to proceed to schedule the run-off of the presidential polls, arising from the 10 October presidential and Representative elections.

The run-off will take place between football star George Weah, who garnered 596,037 votes or 38.4 percent of the vote cast and incumbent vice president Joseph Boakai who got 446,776 votes or 28.8 percent of the ballots.

Of the 2.1 million registered voters, some 1.6 million cast their ballots in the 10 October polls.

The court had earlier halted the run-off the NEC had set for 7 December after it announced the results of the 10 October polls, claiming that the electoral body had failed to address the complaints of Liberty Party filed with the NEC.

The court then mandated the NEC to probe the allegations of widespread irregularities and massive fraud made by the Liberty Party (LP), which was later joined by the governing Unity Party (UP) as an “intervener” in the case.

The NEC proceeded to hear the claims of the LP and UP, ruling that while there were instances of shortfalls, these were not of “weight” to change to results of the first round polls.

The contesting LP and UP took an exception and appealed to the Supreme Court, the final arbiter of legal issues in Liberia.

In its opinion read Thursday by Associate Justice Philip A.Z. Banks, the court said the evidence was insufficient and that it was untenable to expect the court to assume that the irregularities were widespread across the country.

The court noted that the “evidential failure” could not lead the court to annul the elections by calling for a re-run, and considering the national consequences of said decision in the instant case.

“We do not see that overwhelming evidence in the records before us,” Justice Banks said.

But in a “special statement” published in local dailies Friday, UP standard bearer and incumbent Vice President of Liberia, Joseph Boakai, welcomed the ruling of the Court ordering the run-off.

He commended the court for remaining committed to the process and being steadfast to ensure resolution of the electoral disputes in the “best interest of peace and stability in the country.”

He said the verdict of the Supreme Court and history have proven the aggrieved parties, LP and UP, were right in engaging the legal process.

“We as Liberians can henceforth walk with our shoulders high for the display of patience, maturity, and love for country in a process that brought some degree of circumspection from some quarters,” Boakai said.

He noted that Liberians can now “celebrate the triumph of the rule of law and they can also celebrate their resolve to pursue the non-violent means of solving their problems.”

But the standard bearer of the LP, Cllr. Charles Brumskine, said he was “disappointed” in the ruling of the Supreme Court, noting that it “violated our equal protection right as provided in Article 11 (c) of the Constitution.”

He observed that the Court ordered the correction of some of the things the party complained of, that made the electoral process unconstitutional and unlawful, contributing to the massive fraud and pervasive irregularities claimed by the party.

Brumskine called on his supporters to remain calm and law abiding as the nation prepares for the run-off, and thanked the international community for allowing the legal process to come to its legal and logical conclusion.

Meanwhile, Liberians are waiting for the National Elections Commission to announce a new date for the run-off polls.

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