

Summary Report:

3rd Survey on Sierra Leone Election, 2018.



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THE CONTEXT

In February and March 2018, Think Africa Institute [TAI] put out 3 surveys on the Sierra Leone elections. [The first outcome of the survey is on our website.](#) [On our Facebook page](#), we released the data (without text) which pointed to a run-off.

Following these two important surveys, we commissioned one of our networks in Kono, Eastern Sierra Leone to help breakdown the issues making Sam-Sumana and his party Coalition for Change (C4C) the prospective “kingmaker” in the runoff. [The full paper can be downloaded here.](#)

SIERRA LEONE ELECTIONS - SUMMARY REPORT: 3RD THINK AFRICA INSTITUTE SURVEY

The third survey which is the subject of this newsflash reached 513 people distributed across all 14 districts and the diaspora with the majority in Freetown Urban and Rural (79.7%) and the remaining 20.3 distributed among the other districts.

HOW THE DATA LOOKS

Over one week, we collected data using social media – Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and 6 data collectors across Freetown (Urban and Rural), Kono, and Kailahun.

Here are how the respondent distribution looks:

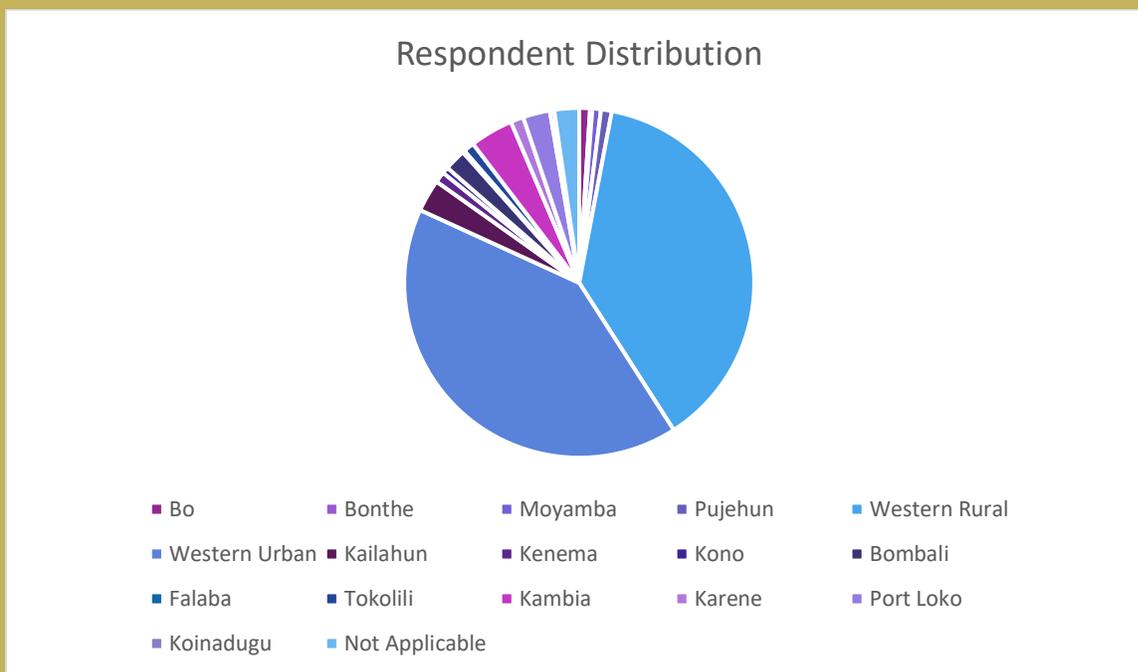


Figure 1: Respondent Distribution

Age Distribution

Figure 2 below shows the age distribution of the respondent within the 21-25 and 29-32 contributing a total of 36% of the respondents (each group contributing 18% each). The above 40 group contributing 14% of respondents.

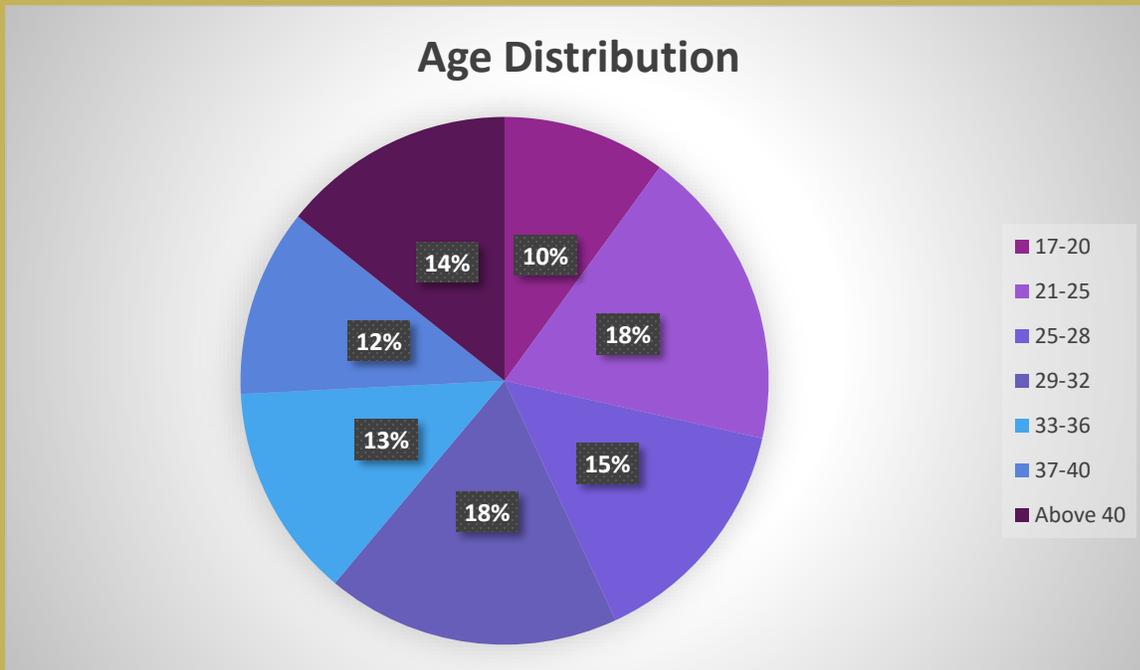


Figure 2: Age Distribution

88% of respondents intend to vote, we assume these to be locals living in Sierra Leone or will be in Sierra Leone by March 31st. 6% would have liked to vote but are not registered while 6% will not vote. See figure 3 below:

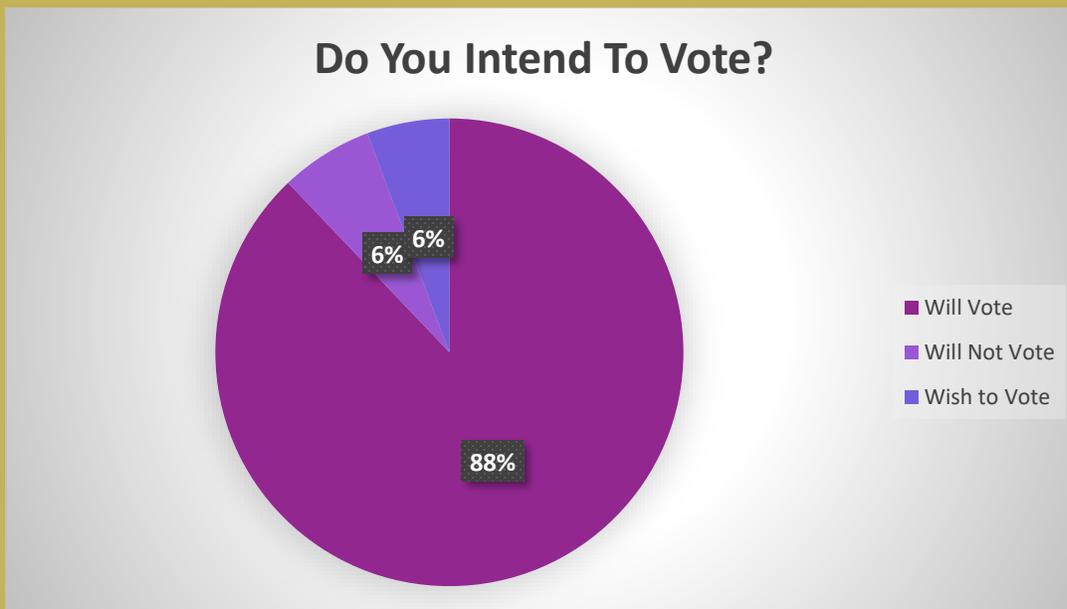


Figure 3: Voter Intention to Vote

The Big Question of Change:

We asked respondents: “Do you think there should be a change in the party that leads this country?” and 51% said “Yes” and 40% said “No” with 9% abstaining.

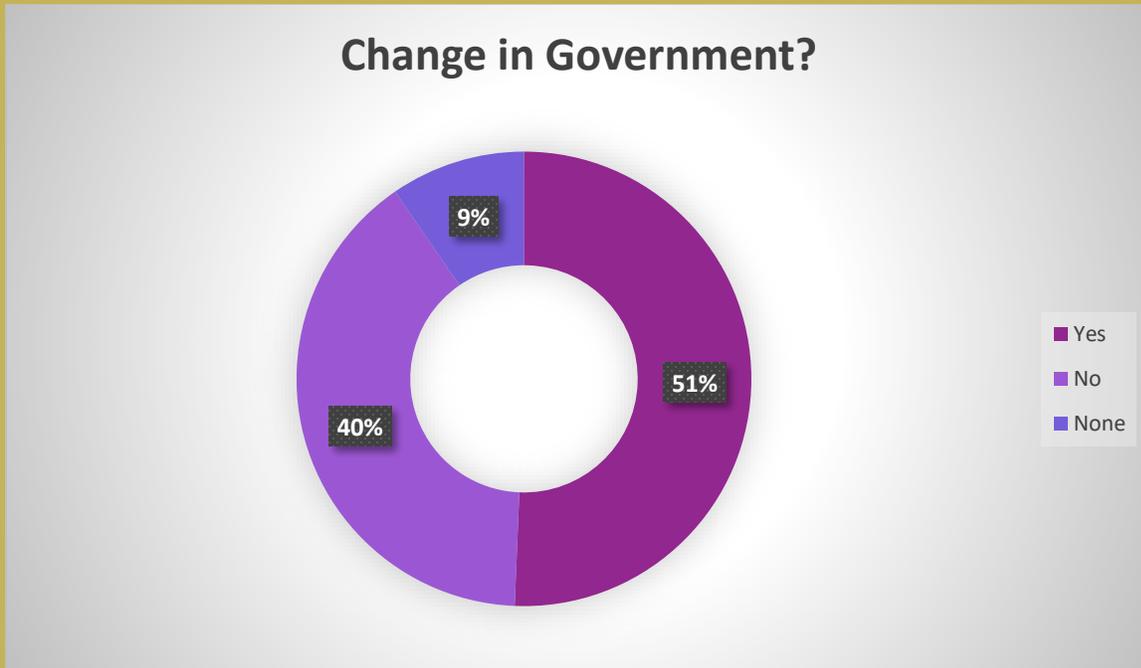


Figure 4: To Change or Not To?

Ordinarily, one would say this is a straight answer to a simple question of whether APC or SLPP wins the election but we recognise the complexity of issues on the ground – the back-channelling between APC and NGC, APC and C4C and APC and other smaller parties that have yet to declare for one of the two run-off contenders. Same can be said for the SLPP back-channelling with the other parties.

Because of the limits our sample and the size of respondents present us, this flash is not intended to “predict” the outcome of the run-off. This summary reports only shows what the trend is.

Delivery of Election Process

We asked respondents about the conduct of NEC, Police and the general outcome of the polls and the responses were generally positive.

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For instance, 59% **“Strongly Agreed”** the March 7th elections were peaceful, while 34.4% **“Agreed”** it was peaceful.

8% of respondents **“Strongly Disagree”** the Police were professional in the delivery of their mandate during the march 7th elections, while 45.7% **“Strongly Agree”** that the police were professional.

Majority of respondents felt the NEC was professional in the delivery of their mandate during the march 7th election.

46.7% of respondents **“Strongly Agree”** the NEC was professional while 11.6% **“Strongly Disagreed”** with the assertion that the NEC was professional in the delivery of their mandate on March 7th.

POST ELECTION VOILENCE, TRIBALISM AND REGIONALISM

Post March 7th, there were many reports of violence, threat of violence based tribal or regional sentiments. Our data shows very little of this on the ground.

We asked: **“Did you or someone you know suffer violence as a result of the March 7th Elections?”** The overwhelming majority reported negatively. 77.6% said **“No”** while 17.1% said **“Yes”** with 5.3% not hearing or knowing of any violence.

The 17.1% who may have suffered or known anyone suffering violence told us the following:

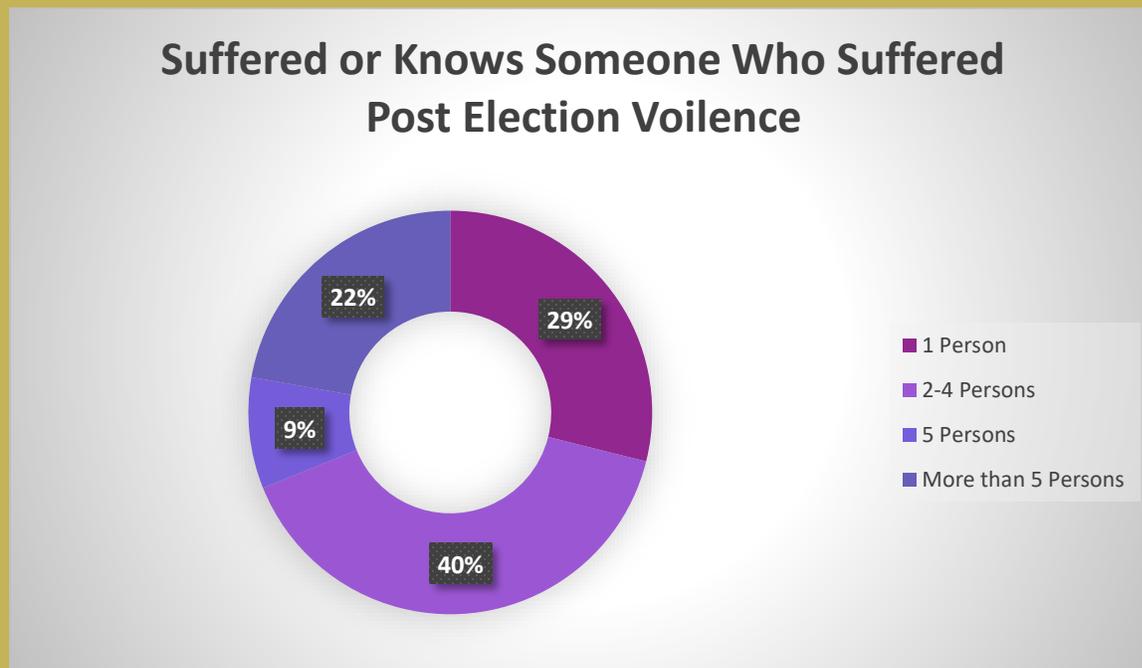


Figure 5: Pre, During and Postion Election Violence

EFFECT OF RESTRICTON OF VEHICULAR MOVEMENT ON ELECTION DAY

This was a big issue before the election and dominated all media spaces. The SLPP and other minority parties took the matter to court. While the court ruled in favour of the Police, the Police later modified their position on vehicular movement. We asked our respondents: “**Did the restriction on vehicular movement affect your ability to vote?**”. Again, the overwhelming majority said no.

See figure 6:

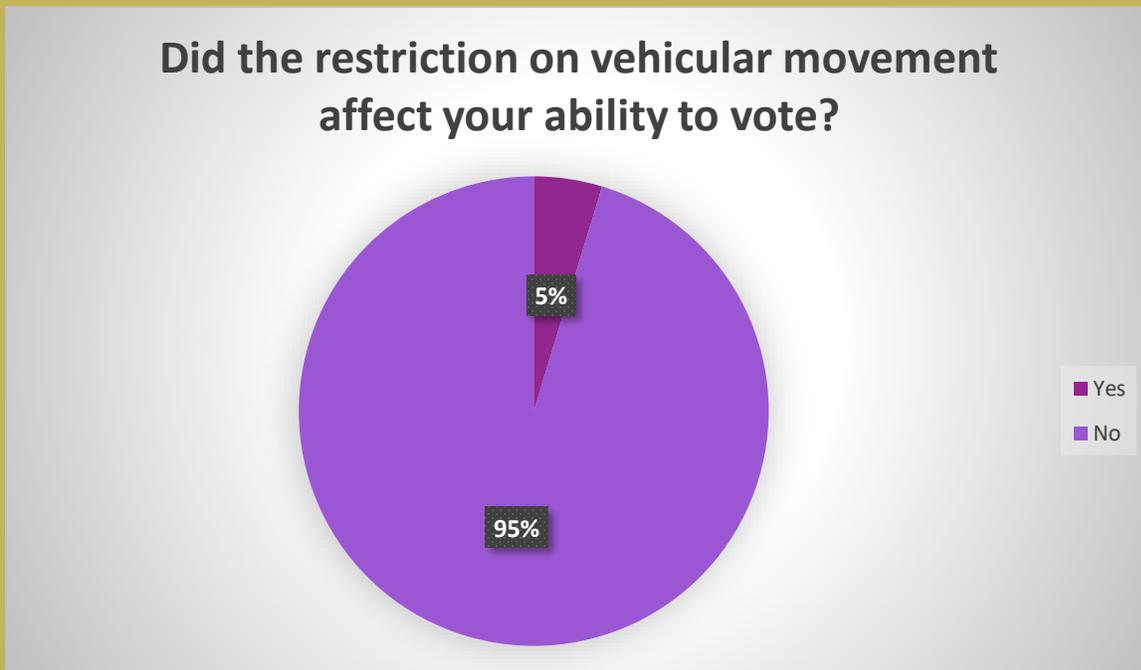


Figure 6: Vehicular Restriction

We agree that the sample and reach of this survey is narrow but it does give context to some of the important issues before, during and after the elections.

We see that on the ground, the brouhaha over regional and tribal sentiments were minimal, also the impact of the vehicular movement – which borders on human rights did not impact so negatively on the elections as it were made to look.

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CONCLUSION

As with our last two surveys, our greatest limitation has been funding to allow us to employ enumerators and to deploy far and wide across Sierra Leone. However, these are interesting pieces of data to build on.

TAI is proud to be a for-profit trail blazer in this area – providing data-based perspective, however restrictive to elections in Sierra Leone.

Our work, in this election is not to **“predict results”** but rather to generate data and information around key issues for the political parties to interface with the voters and to also provide same opportunities to the stakeholders in the election – NEC, iNGOs, NGOs, Security Sector, etc.

Social media and its use for propaganda, especially to cause fear and panic was high before, during and after the election and shows in the data about how respondents felt about the police and NEC and the reported regional and tribal sentiments reported across the country.

While it is important to be proactive in these instances, we saw how a lot of resources was thrown at countering negative tribal and regional sentiments which only went to give prominence to the issues.

We encourage the various actors in the development sector to consider investing in use of social media post-election, highlighting how **not to use it** negatively.

About Think Africa Institute

Think Africa Institute [TAI] is a consulting firm and think tank incorporated in the Netherlands in September 2017.

We are a product of ACIPP Consulting, itself a production of ACIPP West Africa. After 4 years working in Sierra Leone and other West African countries, ACIPP Consulting is transitioning to TAI and as a for-profit business.

TAI is guided by a three-prong philosophy, that;

1. ***Knowledge is created***: We believe knowledge is created and every service we offer MUST create knowledge
2. ***Knowledge is shared***: We believe KNOWLEDGE must be shared. Our service MUST lead to that.
3. ***To grow, we must shed Knowledge***: We believe knowledge can be “Shed” – that old and unusable knowledge is left behind after our service.

Management

Simon Tsike-Sossah, Think Africa Institute’s Founder and Managing Director. He has more than 15 years of experience working in international development sector and is a certified “Civilian Peace Consultant” from the Academy for Conflict Transformation in Bonn, Germany. He has facilitated trainings for countless iNGOs, civil society organizations and government aid agencies such as UNEP, Oxfam, Action Aid, IRN Sierra Leone. Simon has consulted for the Open Society Initiative, West Africa Civil Society Institute, ECOWAS and the West African Civil Society Forum among others.

Annemieke Tsike-Sossah is board member of Think Africa Institute’s parent holding, **Sweet Jollof Group** and supports the organization on administrative and legal tasks. Her background is in international law and after gaining work and life experience through jobs in South Africa and Ghana; she’s been increasing her knowledge on financial, developmental and humanitarian issues since starting with a Dutch-based philanthropy that’s linked to a large brand.

See more at: www.thinkafrica-institute.org.