

SIERRA LEONE

Date of Elections: May 15, 1973

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held to renew all the members of Parliament, after their terms of office had been extended by 1 year. Previous elections had taken place in March 1967.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Sierra Leone, the House of Representatives, consists of the Speaker — elected by the members of Parliament from among its members or persons qualified to be elected as such — and 97 members elected for 5 years. Of this total, 12 are Paramount Chiefs representing Districts, who are elected by members of the Tribal Authority of the specific District.

Electoral System

Citizens of either sex who have attained the age of 21 and are ordinarily resident and registered in a particular ward (the territorial division for election purposes) are entitled to vote for popularly-elected members of the House. No person may be an elector who is insane, serving a sentence of imprisonment or disqualified under any law relating to offenses connected with elections. Electors for Paramount Chiefs are not entitled to vote for other elected members or vice-versa.

Any citizen, either of whose parents is a person of negro African descent, who has attained the age of 25 years, is a registered elector, and is able to speak and read the English language with a degree of proficiency sufficient to enable him to take an active part in parliamentary proceedings may be elected to Parliament. A person who has become a citizen by naturalization is qualified only once he has resided continuously in the country for 25 years after such registration, or has served in the civil or regular armed services for a continuous period of 25 years.

No person may be elected to Parliament if he owes allegiance to a foreign State, is or has been within the 12 previous months a public officer (subject to certain exceptions) or member of the armed forces, is insane, is disqualified from practising his profession within the country, is under a sentence of death or imprisonment exceeding 12 months, or has within the 5 previous

years been sentenced to imprisonment for an offense involving dishonesty, for which he was not pardoned.

Electoral constituencies are established by an Electoral Commission. Each constituency returns one member by simple plurality of vote.

By-elections are held to fill parliamentary seats which fall vacant between general elections.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

President of the Republic Stevens dissolved Parliament on April 18, 1973, and a state of emergency was declared throughout the country the next day in view of the upcoming electoral campaign. Nomination day was set for April 25.

The rather troubled campaign was marked by accusations of intimidation of candidates filing their nomination papers.

The Sierra Leone People's Party, which had held 11 seats in the previous Parliament and figured as the major Opposition, altogether boycotted the election.

As a result of the elections — the first since Sierra Leone became a republic in April 1971 — the All People's Congress (APC) emerged *de facto* as the country's sole party. It captured 84 of the 85 seats at stake, with the remaining seat taken by an Independent. The 12 Paramount Chiefs themselves traditionally join the Government.

Statistics

1. *Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex*

Men	96
Women	1
	97

2. *Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Age Group*

30-40.	25
40-50.	50
50-60.	15
60-70.	7
	97