

SIERRA LEONE

Dates of Elections: 29 and 30 May 1986

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the elective seats in Parliament following premature dissolution of this body. General elections had previously been held in May 1982.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Sierra Leone, the House of Representatives, consists of the President, the Speaker and 127 members of Parliament. Of these Representatives, 105 (formerly 85) are elected for 5 years by universal suffrage, 12 are Paramount Chiefs who represent Districts and are elected by members of the Tribal Authority of the specific District, and 10 (formerly 7) are appointed by the President of the Republic.

Electoral System

Citizens 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 registered who is insane, serving a sentence of imprisonment or disqualified under any law relating to electoral offences.

Any citizen (otherwise than by naturalization) who has attained the age of 21 years, is a registered elector, is a member of a recognized party 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 disqualified from practising his profession within the country, is under a sentence of death or imprisonment exceeding 12 months, or has within the five previous years been sentenced to imprisonment for an offence involving dishonesty, for which he was not pardoned. Also disqualified are persons who are, or have been within 12 months prior to the election date, members of any commission established under the Constitution, or members of the armed forces.

Candidates for the House are chosen by officials of the sole All-People's Congress (APC) party.

Electoral constituencies are established by an electoral commission. Each of the 105 constituencies returns one member by simple majority vote.

By-elections are held to fill elective seats of the House which fall vacant between general elections.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

In October 1985, Major General Joseph Saidu Momoh was elected to succeed Mr. Siaka Stevens as President of the Republic. The 1986 elections were reportedly called a year early in order to choose a Parliament that would reinforce the "new order" of economic reform and public probity advocated by the new President.

Altogether 335 candidates contested the enlarged House of Representatives' 105 popularly-elected seats; all were nominated by the All-People's Congress (APC), the country's only officially-recognized party. Polling was originally scheduled for 15 and 16 May. The voting resulted in a major turnover in the House as many incumbents, including some Ministers, were defeated.

On 11 June, President Momoh announced a new Cabinet.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the House of Representatives

Number of registered electors. 2,000,000 (approx.)

Political Group	Number
All-People's Congress (APC).	105*

* Popularly-elected seats only.