

procedures. The implications of the Supreme Court ruling will be made clear this week when the lower court acts. In addition to presenting additional logistical and financial challenges to the NEC, some Liberians fear that this ruling may open the process for more challenges in the less than three weeks before the election.

In another case before the Supreme Court, Attorney Marcus R. Jones brought a case on behalf of himself and four others whose nomination documents were rejected by the NEC because they lacked the requisite number of registered voters' signatures. The rejected presidential candidates argue that, although they submitted their paperwork to the NEC on the final day of the nomination process, they still should have been allowed the seven-day grace period to amend their documentation. A ruling from the Supreme Court is expected early this week.

Another case concerned a Liberian resident of the United States who did not register to vote, which is a requirement for candidacy, but who unsuccessfully sought nomination as a candidate. The final case involved a presidential aspirant whose political party joined a coalition that chose someone else as its standard bearer, allegedly without consultation with the rejected candidate's party. The Supreme Court has ruled against the petitioners in both of these cases.

Enforcing the Campaign Finance Regulations

Liberia's first campaign finance regulations, adopted in July 2005, required each political party and independent candidate to form a "campaign committee," with a designated treasurer and a depository bank, and to register that committee with the NEC by August 31, 2005. In addition, annual financial reports of all political parties, which are required by the Liberian Constitution but rarely enforced, were due on September 1. In response to civil society calls for enforcement of these deadlines, the NEC has posted the annual reports on the Internet. Meanwhile, the Campaign Monitoring Coalition (CMC), a civil society group, published a scathing report, based on the observations of 24 monitors around the country, alleging use of state resources and actions

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officials in order to reduce costs, simplify logistics, and benefit from their knowledge of local languages and communities

Concerns about IDP Participation

The NEC has expressed concern that disruptions in camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) may create problems during the upcoming elections. When IDPs registered to vote, they were given the opportunity to indicate whether they preferred to cast their ballots in their counties of origin or in their IDP camps. Seventy-one percent of IDPs registered to vote in their counties of origin. IDPs who chose to vote in their counties of origin and have returned to those counties can cast ballots for President and Vice-President, Senate and House of Representatives (the NEC has stated that as many as 35,000 IDPs fall into this category, though definitive data is not available). IDPs who registered to vote in the IDP camps will be able to cast ballots for all three races in the counties and districts in which their camps are located. In places where camps have subsequently been closed, the NEC will open polling places where the camps used to be for IDPs registered to vote there.

As some IDPs have been led to their counties of origin

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