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Election Observation - Manual 1/2000

An Introduction to the Methodology and Organization

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Preface

In 1990 The Norwegian Helsinki Committee, in cooperation with The Norwegian Institute for Human Rights, set about the process of developing a manual for election observation. After having consulted with the EU Commission, OSCE institutions and Officials, a manual was published in 1996. The manual was subsequently employed at numerous elections in the OSCE area. Due to great interest, The Norwegian Helsinki Committee decides to reissue the manual in an improved and more handy format.

1. Introduction

In the last few years, observation of elections and referenda has emerged as an important task in democracy and human rights work worldwide. An important reason for the focus on elections is their nature as essentially human rights events: the conduct of free and fair elections presupposes adherence to other human rights, such as freedom of expression, assembly, association, movement, and freedom from intimidation. At the same time, free and fair elections consolidate respect for human rights principles.

While election observation indeed is a growth industry, the quality and professionalism of the work that has been done have varied. There is an obvious need for establishing a more unified method for the monitoring of elections as well as for the presentation of findings. This Manual for Election Observation tries to answer that need by providing a set of practical guidelines for the conduct of an election observation mission.

The manual covers the activities of observers in the weeks and days immediately prior to the election and during the election itself; the organisation, performance, security issues, results evaluation and presentation of findings. It does not cover an in-depth assessment of the campaign, the role of the media, or the situation that emerges after the election: the extent to and manner in which the election results are implemented. However, information on the campaign should be collected, and an assessment of the electoral legislation should always be carried out, without going into a in-depth and detailed analysis.

2. Universal principles for free and fair elections

Delegations of election observers often consist of representatives from different countries with experience from rather different electoral systems. It is often tempting to gauge what we observe by using our own country's system as reference, and this may lead to discussions in the group. It is therefore important to work out terms of reference that give common ground to all involved parties by covering the universal principles underlying the notions of free and fair elections and democracy, without being biased. These universal principles do not discriminate between internationally well accepted electoral systems. However, unfair systems can be conceived; e.g. a multiple (as opposed to single) member majority based system where the largest party gets all members to a representative assembly from that constituency.

The OSCE underlined in the Document of the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Human Dimension in Copenhagen in 1990 the right of citizens to participate in the government of their country and the central role of elections for securing their political participation. In addition, the Copenhagen Document obliges the participating states to invite observers to elections. The right to

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

These principles are also found with slightly different wording in the main legally binding instruments, e.g. the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights. However, from experience we know that "free and fair" is not just a simple dichotomy, but a continuum; hence we will have to develop indicators with which one can operate more precisely, and we need more accurate methods of measuring them.

With this as our starting point there is still a need to define more specifically and in operational terms universal criteria which should be met by free and fair elections. These criteria are provided by democratic tradition and grouped under five key words: Universal, Equal, Secret, Free and Transparent. In some cases the universal principles listed cannot all be fully satisfied, and in such cases a trade off must be based on sound judgement.

A. Universal

A.1. The right to vote

The right to vote must be given to all citizens of the country on equal terms, provided they have reached a pre-described age.

Sometimes, however, the definition of a citizen can be a complicated matter. Especially in transition periods the definition of a citizen has caused conflicts. People meeting the requirements on age and who have lived in the country as de facto citizens for a substantial number of years, should be given the opportunity to obtain citizenship.

Convicts or people under legal detention may in some countries be barred from exercising the right to vote, without this being a violation of the universal principles.

The practical arrangement for securing the voters' right to vote must be publicly known and provide for possibilities for the voters to check their right well in advance, e.g. by checking the electoral rolls.

A.2 The right to nominate candidates

All political forces and movements should be able to nominate candidates on equal terms. The rules must be clear and predictable, and the provisions for registration of political parties must not be designed to exclude political competitors, or make it difficult for minorities to organise and nominate their preferred candidates.

A.3 The right to stand for election

The same principles underlying the right to vote, applies for the right to be a candidate. Often extra restrictions are introduced for being a candidate such as having had residence in the country for some period of time before the elections, or having residence in the constituency, or having reached a higher age than the minimum voting age. Such restrictions may well be acceptable.

Provisions must not be introduced for the purpose of damaging specific political forces.

B. Equal

B.1 Equal value of votes

The number of electors of the constituencies should be close to proportional to the number of seats to be elected from each constituency.

There must be no provisions that would support any discrimination due to ethnicity, sex, language, religion, sexual orientation, or other limitations that are opposed to the wording and intentions of the international agreements on prevention of discrimination.

Votes may be given different weight in order to give groups that would normally have a weak position in society a better representation. Such positive discrimination is commonly accepted concerning special geographical areas (e.g. locations far from the centre) whereas positive discrimination based on ethnicity has proven to be controversial in many countries and must be given due attention to avoid unfair practices.

B.2 Fair procedures for calculating the result

The method for aggregating results must be predetermined, visible and verifiable.

For the elections to representative assemblies there are different principles applied in different electoral systems; proportional systems and systems based on single member constituencies are here given as two extremes, which are both internationally well accepted.

On the other hand unfair systems can be conceived. An example might be a multiple (as opposed to a single) member majority based system where the largest party gets all the members to a representative assembly from that constituency. The procedure employed should give parties or groups which do not get a majority vote reasonable representation in the assembly.

C. Secret

C.1 Free and secret vote

Votes must be cast without pressure from anybody. The vote should be cast personally in full secrecy, in an atmosphere free from pressure and intimidation, without the possibility of tracing individual votes.

Illiteracy or other impediments which make the casting of vote difficult, must be duly addressed in the information given on the ballot or through predetermined procedures for necessary assistance, without enacting any pressure on the voter.

D. Free

D.1 Freedom to campaign

The rights of freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of assembly must, if not previously secured on a permanent basis, be ensured in sufficient time prior to the election so as to allow political organization and campaigning, securing information to voters on candidates and issues. All recognized parties, movements or individual candidates taking part in the elections must be given the possibility to campaign and promote themselves or their political positions.

D.2 Effective complaint procedures

The right to an effective remedy to an independent and impartial national legal instance must be ensured for all involved parties in the electoral process.

D.3 Periodic elections

Maximal duration of mandates must be predefined. The periods should have a reasonable length.

D.4 Peaceful conditions

The conditions of the elections should be peaceful, and as far as possible without high tension.

D.5 Fair themes for referenda

The theme and formulation of a referendum should give the electorate a fair possibility of expressing their opinion, and the interpretation of the results should not be ambiguous.

E. Transparent

E.1 Predictable procedures

Each step in the election process must be described in the election laws and regulations, and the provisions must be published well before the elections. All parties and movements must be allowed appropriate time for preparation.

E.2 Insight in results

The results should be published both aggregated as well as broken down by constituencies and polling stations, and the public should thus be given a chance to verify the results.

E.3 Security against fraud

The system must be sufficiently secured against fraud. This is done by the representation in all bodies that handles votes by well respected, neutral authorities or by multi-party representation, by secure control systems for voters, by secure storing and transportation of ballots, and by results being published at all relevant levels.

There must be an adequate system for controlling that nobody can give multiple votes. This is normally done by crossing out in the electoral rolls, by stamping identity cards or by giving a stamp on a hand, if rolls are not available.

There should be access for national and international observers to the full process.

3. Method

3.1 General

Knowledge of the universal principles is the heart of an election observation mission. The electoral legislation must as a start be assessed against these principles. Secondly, the electoral process - the actual practice - must be assessed against the electoral legislation. The national laws will describe the practical arrangements for how the universal principles can be satisfied. Sometimes those laws may be impractical, complicated or even too strict. In those cases non-compliance with the laws may be considered less serious from the international observers' point of view than from the national authority's.

As can be surmised by the emphasis on universal principles, the main method of an election observer is qualitative analysis. The observer should therefore have a good general knowledge of election systems and electoral law. In addition, quantitative analyses are made on the basis of the check list forms filled out during the polling station observations on election day and the observation of the count.

An election observation mission consists of four stages. The first stage is dedicated to becoming familiar with the country's electoral legislation and collecting relevant background material. The second stage is mainly concerned with interviewing relevant experts, candidates and others (normally, this is the stage when the observer arrives in the country). The third stage is the election day(s) observation, and the fourth is concerned with the processing and presentation of the findings and recommendations.

3.2 Preconditions for Dispatching Observer Missions

There is a possibility that a government will attempt to influence the conditions under which election observers operate as to facilitate their legitimising presence. Therefore, in the interest of the observers' credibility, and of election observation *per se*, it is necessary to set strict preconditions for observer missions:

- - Elections must be held under reasonably peaceful circumstances,

- - The electoral legislation and its implementing regulations must meet democratic standards, i.e. conform with the universal principles,
- - The government concerned should invite and accredit election observers in good time prior to the elections,

Even though an assessment of whether these criteria are met may be complicated at this stage due to lack of information, a conscious decision should be made on whether to go ahead or not.

3.3 Planning and Preparation

Thorough preparation is needed before starting the observation mission. Plans and checklists should be adequately set up for the particular situation. Elections are usually organised along a local-regional-central axis: there are polling stations, constituency (or regional) electoral commissions, and a national electoral commission (or board). The observer should operate on all levels; usually s/he will be active first on the central level, then on constituency and local level on the day(s) of election.

The election day(s) observation will always be based on a sample. Normally, only a small fraction of the total number of polling stations will be visited, and only for a very short time. During the count, even fewer stations will be assessed. At the different places only a selection of election procedure elements will be observed.

It is therefore important that the planning is done in such a way that the sample selected is as representative as possible. Make sure that cities and countryside, areas with different social structure, different stages of the elections etc. are covered. In particular, make sure that some polling stations are visited when they open, others when they close.

Under all circumstances it is important that conclusions are not drawn beyond the facts collected during the mission.

3.4 Coordination

The observers should at all times keep close contact with their coordinating OSCE institution. Coordination based on a common understanding of the observation mission provides the most effective approach to the task. The coordination should make sure that different geographical and social areas, all levels of the electoral system as well as the different procedures are observed in a reliable manner.

Within the group a reasonable split in smaller teams should be made. On election day teams of two persons seems to be adequate. When establishing the observation teams, both good knowledge of the country as well as professional skill and experience in elections should be represented. One team should have as its special duty to follow the electoral boards at national and constituency levels, whereas most of the teams will visit a number of polling stations. Depending on the geographical distances in the district covered, from 10 to 20 polling stations may be covered during one day.

All the data collected should be compiled before the conclusions are drawn.

3.5 Use of Check Lists

If the coordinating OSCE institution does not provide upgraded versions of the check lists forms, the observers should modify and enhance the forms to cover aspects of that specific election. Items that are regarded crucial to the actual situation should be added. Check lists are primary tools of the election observer; s/he must use them at the polling stations and during the count.

Check lists serve two purposes:

1. They provide an **aide mémoire** for the observers and thus help to secure that all aspects of the elections are covered.
2. The filled-out check lists will also constitute part of the field records from the observations and thus provide the basic evidence that we later draw conclusions from.

4. Code of conduct

The observer must at all times be aware that her/his task is to monitor democracy, not to be operationally involved in it, and therefore one should as an observer maintain a neutral position in the election process. Particular caution should be shown in dealings with press and media; comments from the observers may sometimes be twisted and their meaning changed - unintentionally, or not. However, it is essential that observers are as visible as possible in the areas in which they are operating. Voters, parties and local officials should know that observers are present, what their mandate is, and how to get in touch with them.

Listed below are some main attitudes and rules of thumb that the observer should adhere to:

1. act in a strictly neutral and unbiased manner in relation to national authorities, parties and candidates, the voters, press and media, and the election observer's organisation; not act in any way prejudicial to the election system in the country,
2. disclose any relationship with the involved parties that may lead to a conflict of interests during observation and assessment; not accept any gifts from parties or persons involved in the election,
3. comply with national laws and regulations, and the electoral code,
4. be cautious when disclosing information gathered during the observation, and not disclose conclusions prematurely,
5. base all conclusions on verifiable, factual evidence, and to use agreed standards of reference

5. Pre-election period: observation targets

Based on an understanding of the formal aspects of the election as outlined earlier, the delegates should seek to observe and investigate activities first and foremost at the national level and if assigned to a specific region focus on the constituency and polling station levels. During the pre-election period, the observer should pay particular attention to the following aspects of the electoral process;

5.1 Method for Calculation of Results

The election law should be assessed against the universal principles, in particular the division in constituencies, the allotment of seats to candidates or parties. One should in particular look out for any bias or unfair built-in rules that are designed to hurt minority groups or groups that will not obtain a majority of the votes.

In the case of referenda, the theme of referendum should be assessed to make sure that voters get a fair possibility to express their opinions.

5.2 Voter Registration

Except in elections in which no voters' list is compiled (and voting allowed on the base of an I.D. or other documents), Voter registration is crucial for the factors of universality and equality. Without well maintained and regularly updated voter registries, the electoral commissions and officials are put under severe strain.

- Registration facilities must be available in all parts of a country and allow all people who are entitled to register to do so.
- The voters' list should be a public document to permit complaints about illegal inclusion or exclusion.
- Safeguards should exist to avoid multiple registration, and there should be provisions for registration of absentee voters.
- If the voters receive special voters' cards, there must be adequate security to avoid duplication or counterfeiting of the cards?

5.3 Financing and Campaigning

The observers should scrutinise the availability of venues for rallies and campaign material, access of all candidates and parties to places and audiences of their choice and effective freedom of assembly and of opinion for all competing political forces. In this respect, the practice of the media, especially state media, is of crucial importance. Whether this is regulated by the election law or laws on the media and public financing, equal access to sources of finance and publicity must be guaranteed. Particular attention should be paid to attempts to the use of intimidation or violence to inhibit campaigning.

5.4 Complaint Procedures

Complaints concerning the registration of voters and candidacies must be equitably dealt with by the judicial authorities nominated for this purpose by the electoral law. There must also be adequate possibilities for filing complaints about the conduct of the poll, the count and the implementation of the results. The complaints that are made during the electoral process serve as indicators of the issues that should be investigated by the observer.

5.5 Civic and Voter Education

People must know their rights to use them; hence sufficient civic and voter education is a prerequisite for the factors of universality and equality. In this regard, particular attention should be given to inequalities in information that prevent certain categories of voters from effectively exercising their rights as well as to biased information. Potentially "weak" categories of voters in this respect, include ethnic and language minorities. Special measures should be taken to ensure that illiterate persons are able to participate in, and understand, the electoral process. It is important that voter education and campaigning are clearly separated in electoral information given by the authorities.

5.6 Political Background and the Electoral Environment

The observer should gain an understanding of the general setting in which the election is taking place. Information should be collected regarding the following aspects, paying particular attention to possible government control of the electoral process:

1. Which parties¹ are participating in the election (the subject matter and main positions in the case of a referendum) and their political platforms.
2. The reasons for potential exclusion of parties should be established, and the political parties' main concerns relating to the electoral process should be clarified and investigated;
3. The overall political and human rights environment including the security situation, and its potential influence on the election

This information along with perceptions of whether the election is free and fair, should be obtained from as wide a range of parties as possible. The delegates should consult with:

- government representatives
- the central election commission
- all political parties

- national minorities (if relevant)
- the media
- trade unions and other national NGOs
- national experts, academics, etc.
- international representatives: residing diplomats and NGO representatives.

The information collected should be documented with reference to sources, so that the basis for later comments and conclusions is clear. This is particularly important, since such conclusions will be based on secondary sources and not observations by the delegates themselves.

5.7 Electoral Bodies

The government and judicial bodies directly or indirectly involved in the electoral process, and the electoral commissions on all levels, must be independent and their work open to scrutiny. Electoral commissions should consist of representatives from different political parties and minority populations. The sources of finance and the budget for the electoral bodies should be established.

5.8 Ballot Design and Security

The complexity or simplicity of the ballot directly affects the efficiency of voting process. The ballot should be easy to fill out for the voter, and safeguarded, by e.g. watermarks, to avoid duplication. The observer should find out who printed the ballots and where, how they were stored and distributed to the different regions, and at what time this was done prior to the elections.

5.9 Technical Arrangements

The observers should, if possible, establish whether preparations have been taking place in accordance with the electoral law and the instructions issued at the polling station and constituency levels, whether the necessary materials are in place (electoral roll, ballot papers, ballot boxes etc.), and if electoral officers have received sufficient training and are familiar with the tasks to be carried out and routines to be followed on the day(s) of election.

6. The election day(s)

6.1 Activities at Polling Station Level

When arriving at the polling station, the observer's accreditation should be shown to the electoral officer(s) in charge and it should be made sure that the purpose of the mission is well understood by the officials. The basic aim of observing at the polling station level, is to verify whether the actual voting is done in accordance with the universal principles and the electoral procedures. Findings must be documented in the check list forms. These should be filled out discreetly while at the polling station.

The observers should arrive at a polling station prior to the official opening to observe the pre-opening procedures. These may include demonstrating to the observers that the boxes are empty before sealing.

In addition to the passive observation, the observer should approach the voters with questions regarding their impression of the election. This must be done in a situation that gives the maximum of confidence, and without fear from pressure from anybody, if necessary outside the range of hearing by the authorities. The observer should be careful with giving information; neither officials or voters should know the route the observer plans to take. The observer should note how local observers are treated by the electoral officials.

Elections are supposed to be open to the whole electorate; however, certain groups are sometimes overlooked in the electoral procedures. People who are illiterate must be able to distinguish between the ballots without having their right to secret elections infringed. Handicapped or severely ill people must also have a chance to vote. The observer should take note of how these practical puzzles are dealt with in the electoral procedures, and how the secrecy of voting is maintained in the best possible manner.

At the close of the polls, the observer should be present to ascertain that the procedures for closing are followed. If the count is not performed at the polling station, the observers should check the security of the ballot boxes by guards or by sealing of ballot boxes, and the security during the transport.

6.2 Activities at National and Constituency Level

The constituency level is important on the election day as the location of centres for counting and/or aggregation of results. Often the regional or local electoral commissions will have their headquarters at this level, and these should also be interviewed regarding the electoral procedures and their impressions of the election at large.

The regional and central electoral commissions are involved in the important decisions related to the practical implementation of the elections that are made throughout the day. Special concern should be given to the procedures for handling complaints from voters or parties during the elections.

6.3 Reporting During the Observation

During the observation, the observers may be asked by election officers, the press or others about the impressions so far. One may even be asked for advice in specific situations. The observer should at this stage abstain from giving any comments that can be taken as conclusive. However, what the observer can and should do is to ask the local officer in charge about non-conformities observed, without giving any advice or order on remedial actions. If necessary, the observer may give an oral report to the authorities at higher level about severe irregularities observed.

7. The count

The count is either organised at the polling station level, and the results aggregated from there, or the ballots are transported to a central place in the constituency, or even further up, and counted there.

7.1 Activities at Polling Station Level

If the count is done at the polling station, the full count should be observed to the end. The results should be part of the report, because it will constitute a sample of verified results that can be matched with the overall published results. Findings and results must be documented in the check list forms for the count.

The reliability of the count, double counting and storing of ballots for later verification should be observed. There should be an adequate number of counting staff and supervisors. The balancing of the number of crosses in the electoral rolls against number of ballots or other relevant cross checks should be observed and reported. Adequate and impartial arrangements should be made to enable representatives of all parties and candidates to watch the count.

The procedure for rejecting void votes and invalidating ballots should be closely followed. If the voter's intention is clear, her/his vote should be allowed.

7.2 Activities at National and Constituency Level

The constituency level is normally the first level of aggregation. The verification procedures should be observed, and also the procedures for publishing local results. The results should be made available to the public as promptly as possible.

The presentation of comprehensive results down to the lowest level of count is important for two reasons: 1) the observers and the public in general can verify the results of selected counting stations and control that they are correctly aggregated to the higher levels, and 2) the observers can use the observe and verified results as indicators of the local results.

It is important that the observers have fully understood the way of calculating the results, and that the calculation is verifiable from the lowest counting unit up to the national level. This is possible if all basic results from the count are made available in an easy way either at constituency level or at national level, and if the local results can undergo spot checks. In that case also the full calculation can be checked.

8. Post-election period

8.1 Announcement of Results

The observer should note whether there is any undue delay before the results are published and, if so, find out the reason for this. If complaints are made, the observer should follow the legal process thus initiated.

8.2 Press Conference

Often a press conference is given before leaving the country and a press release is submitted. The delegations of observers should concentrate on presenting the main findings and summarize the facts, leaving the overall assessment and recommendations to the final report. Statements given by individuals based on a limited observation experience should be avoided. All statements should be coordinated and be based on the full observation material.

8.3 The Written Report

The observation mission should always end up with presenting a written report, and a the format and a table of contents are presented in Appendix C. Often individual observers or groups of observers will be asked to document their findings only, and an extensive report will only be presented by the coordinating organisation.

The structure of the written report falls in two parts. One is concerned with the conclusion, descriptions of the method employed, assessments and recommendations. The second part (the appendixes) contains the on-site observations of the delegation, unused copies of the checklist(s) employed, information about the electoral law and procedures, and other relevant material.

The aim of the report is to arrive at a conclusion as to whether the election can be considered free and fair. This conclusion must be based on verifiable data and be presented in a concise and accessible manner.

The report should follow the elections by no more than two weeks. A standard deadline is to have the report ready 10 days after returning from the monitoring mission. The report should be distributed to relevant organisations and national authorities concerned with the election.

Appendix A: Checklist for use at polling station

The first part of this checklist is to be filled in for each polling station visited, and is part of the records kept from the observation.

- OBSERVER:
- TIME ENTERED THE STATION:
- TIME LEFT THE STATION:
- POLLING STATION:
- NUMBER OF REGISTRED VOTERS:
- Name of the head official at the polling station:

- Composition of the officials (Number of officials appointed and present, civil position, parties represented etc.):
- Are the polling station premises satisfactory? yes/no
- Are ballot boxes properly controlled (eg sealed)? Yes/No - Comment:
- Are ballots available in appropriate number and are they well controlled? Yes/No - Comment;
- Are the lists of voters properly filled in and kept (any complaints from voters on incomplete lists)? Yes/No - Comment:
- Do voters obtain ballots through legal procedures or can a ballot be obtained otherwise (because a person is recognized by an official, by presenting other than prescribed ID)? yes/no - Comment:
- Are the procedures for preventing double votes (stamping ID card, signing list, ticking off lists etc.) properly implemented? Yes/No - Comment:
- Are officials without any duties connected to the vote present at the polling station (such as military officers, politicians without election duties, candidates, etc Yes/No - Comment:
- Are all measures to secure secret vote properly implemented (only one in the booth at the time, ballot folded or in cover when dropped in the ballot box, etc.)? Yes/No - Comment:
- Are family members (or friends/colleagues) allowed to vote for one another? Yes/no - Comment:
- List other observers present (international, domestic, representatives of parties/candidates)? Yes/No - Comment:
- Is there any sign of campaigning or campaign material in or outside the station? Yes/No - Comment:
- If an elector requires assistance, is he assisted as per the law? Comment:
- Ist there any sign of pressure on the voters? yes/no - Comment:
- Other findings (e.g. from the key words on the last page):
If present at the opening of the election:
- Are ballot boxes properly controlled (eg verified empty boxes, sealing etc) as per the law before the voting started? Yes/No - Comment:
- Does the voting commence on time? Yes/No - Comment:
- Is the adequate prescribed number of officials present? yes/no - Comment:
If present at the closing of the polling station:
- Is the deposit of ballot boxes over night secured, in the case of a two day vote? Yes/No - Comment:
- Does the polling station close on time? Yes/No - Comment:
- If the count is not done at the polling station, are the ballot boxes properly sealed and the transport secured? Yes/No - Comment:

THE FOLLOWING LIST IS INTENDED AS AN AIDE MÉMOIRE ONLY:

- Are the officials competent and familiar with their duties?
- If provisions are made for making account of all ballots (e.g. by stamping valid ballots and maculation of obsolete ballots), are these provisions followed?
- Is there good general order at an outside the polling station?
- Are all parties or candidates treated similarly at the polling station?
- Are advance voters, voters from other districts and mobile ballot boxes handled properly?

Appendix B: Checklist for the count

This checklist is used at the lowest level of counting the votes. Often this is at the polling station level, but not necessarily.

- OBSERVER:
 - TYPE OF ELECTION:
 - POLLING STATION:
 - TIME ENTERED THE STATION:
 - TIME LEFT THE STATION:
1. Are the procedures for handling unused ballots, stamps, etc. being followed? Yes/No - Comment:
 2. Are the ballot boxes opened in the presence of the authorised persons? Yes/No - Comment:

3. Are spoiled/unused ballots handled so as to avoid that they are used illegally? yes/no - Comment:
4. List other observers present (international, domestic, representatives of candidates/parties)? yes/no - Comment:
5. Is a prescribed and adequate counting procedure followed (sorting, reading, checking)? Yes/No - Comment:
6. Are the results correctly reported and published (if relevant)? Yes/No - Comment:
7. Are the results properly verified by the count team? Yes/No - Comment:
8. Are any complaints raised during the count? Yes/No - Comment: >
9. Are the ballots secured properly after the count? yes/no Comment:

THE RESULTS AT THE POLLING STATION WILL BE USED AS A SPOT CHECK FOR THE AGGREGATED RESULTS ONCE THEY ARE PUBLISHED. THEREFORE THE ACTUAL RESULTS SHOULD BE RECORDED.

- Number of registered voters in total
- Number of voters having voted.
- Number of void votes (*)
- Balance of unused ballots (if relevant)
- List/candidate -Number of votes

*) If the number of void votes is high, give the reasons for that:

Appendix C

1.0 Executive Summary (if necessary)

Conclusions on:

- Election law. - Political situation and campaign (limited assessment). - Implementation.

2.0 Introduction

- Background information about the delegation; why it was sent, with whom it cooperated, length of stay.

- Information about the other election international observation missions in the country, and information about coordinating institutions.

- Information about local observers.

3.0 Method and Organization of the Election Observation

- Description of the method employed by the delegation.

- Description of briefings and meetings with e.g. press and media, government and opposition representatives, representatives of electoral commissions, independent organizations, other election observers, etc.

- Emphasise that the observations are based on a sample, and that there may well be undisclosed flaws and errors. State the observation coverage, eg. percentage of number of polling stations visited.

4.0 Political Background and Campaign

- A short presentation of the historical and political background for the elections. Short description of the size and anatomy (i.e. ethnic, social, demographic composition) of the electorate.

- A limited assessment of the campaign.

5.0 The Electoral System

- Short description of the type of election (e.g. presidential or local), and the organization of the election.

- Description of the organization and work of the electoral commissions (on central and local levels).

- Description of the electoral procedures on the different levels.

6.0 Observations from the Elections

Here a summary is given based on the observations (field records) as documented in the filled in checklists that are enclosed in the appendix. Key elements are pressure on voters, secrecy of votes, possibilities of fraud, the count, publishing of results, etc.

7.0 Conclusions

- Assessment regarding the election system, the political situation and, above all, the observations made.

- Assessment of the results actually observed with a comparison with the relevant official

results.

- If relevant; conclusions from other observation teams.
- Suggestions for improvements of the electoral system.
- Lessons learned to improve the quality of succeeding observations.

APPENDICES

A. An unused copy of the checklist(s) employed.

B. The on-site findings, i.e. short reports from the sites visited where the time of arrival at the site, number of voters belonging to the polling station and observations as documented by the filled in checklists.

C. The observed results from count.

D. Extracts from the electoral law(s) with amendments and instructions, if available.

E. Instructions and reference documents submitted to the observers.

F. Press releases or intermediate reports filed.

G. Ballot samples.

H. Other relevant information.

1 The term political party is here employed in a wide sense, comprising the existence of formal parties, lists of candidates forwarded by organizations and other institutions empowered to do so, or single candidates.

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