

# **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTION OBSERVERS**

## **Respect the Laws of the Country and the Authority of Electoral Bodies**

Observers must respect the laws of the country and the authority of the bodies charged with administering the electoral process.

Observers must maintain a respectful attitude toward electoral officials.

Observers must note if laws, regulations or the actions of state and/or electoral officials unduly burden or obstruct the exercise of election related rights guaranteed by law, constitution or applicable international instruments.

## **Respect the Integrity of the Election Observation Mission**

Observers must respect and protect the integrity of the election observation mission. This includes following this Code of Conduct, any written instructions and any verbal instructions from the observation mission's leadership.

Observers must report to the leadership of the observation mission any conflicts of interest they may have and any improper behaviour they see conducted by other observers that are part of the mission.

## **Maintain Strict Political Impartiality at All Times**

Observers must maintain strict political impartiality at all times, including leisure time. They must not express or exhibit any bias or preference in relation to referenda issues or in relation to any contentious issues in the election process.

## **Do Not Obstruct Election Processes**

Observers must not obstruct any element of the election process, including pre-election processes, voting, counting and tabulation of results and processes transpiring after election day.

Observers may bring irregularities, fraud or significant problems to the attention of election officials on the spot, unless this is prohibited by law, and must do so in a non-obstructive manner.

Observers may ask questions of election officials and other observers inside polling stations and may answer questions about their own activities, as long as observers do not obstruct the election process. In answering questions observers should not seek to direct the election process.

Observers may ask and answer questions of voters but may not ask them to tell for which referendum position they voted.

## **Provide Appropriate Identification**

Observers must display identification provided by the election observation mission, and must present it to electoral officials and other interested national authorities when requested.

## **Maintain Accuracy of Observations and Professionalism in Drawing Conclusions**

Observers must ensure that all of their observations are accurate.

Observations must be comprehensive, noting positive as well as negative factors, distinguishing between significant and insignificant factors and identifying patterns that could have an important impact on the integrity of the election process.

Observers' judgments must be based on the highest standards for accuracy of information and impartiality of analysis, distinguishing subjective factors from objective evidence.

Observers must base all conclusions on factual and verifiable evidence and not draw conclusions prematurely.

Observers also must keep a well documented record of where they observed, the observations made and other relevant information as required by the election observation mission and must turn in such documentation to the mission.

## **Refrain from Making Comments to the Public or the Media before the Mission Speaks**

Observers must refrain from making any personal comments about their observations or conclusions to the news media or members of the public before the election observation mission makes a statement, unless specifically instructed otherwise by the observation mission's leadership.

Observers may explain the nature of the observation mission, its activities and other matters deemed appropriate by the observation mission and should refer the media or other interested persons to the those individuals designated by the observation mission.

## **Cooperate with Other Election Observers**

Observers must be aware of other election observation missions, and cooperate with them as instructed by the leadership of the election observation mission.

## **Maintain Proper Personal Behaviour**

Observers must maintain proper personal behaviour and respect others, including exhibiting sensitivity for cultures and customs, exercise sound judgment in personal interactions and observe the highest level of professional conduct at all times, including leisure time.

## **Violations of This Code of Conduct**

In a case of concern about the violation of this Code of Conduct, the election observation mission shall conduct an inquiry into the matter. If a serious violation is found to have occurred, the observer concerned may have their observer accreditation withdrawn or be dismissed from the election observation mission. The authority for such determinations rests solely with the leadership of the election observation mission.

## **Pledge to Follow This Code of Conduct**

Every person who participates in this election observation mission must read and understand this Code of Conduct and must sign a pledge to follow it.