

Communiqué
***on Benefits of Co-operation between International and Non-
Partisan Citizen Election Observer Organizations***

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This Communiqué by endorsers and supporters of the Declaration of Principles of International Election Observation and endorsers and supporters of the Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations for the purpose of further advancement of genuinely democratic elections throughout the world, protection of electoral rights of citizens in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and proper implementation of their respective functions by the independent observation missions. The Communiqué is premised on mutual commitment of international and citizen observer organizations to co-operate, as noted in the two respective Declarations.

1. Signatories of the Communiqué reiterate their common understanding that
 - a) Genuine democratic elections are an expression of sovereignty, which belongs to the people of a country, the free expression of whose will provides the basis for the authority and legitimacy of government. The rights of citizens to vote and to be elected at periodic, genuine democratic elections are internationally recognized human rights. Genuine democratic elections are central for maintaining peace and stability, and they provide the mandate for democratic governance.
 - b) In accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ICCPR and other international instruments, everyone has the right and must be provided with the opportunity to participate in the government and public affairs of his or her country, without any discrimination prohibited by international human rights principles and without any unreasonable restrictions. This right can be exercised directly, by participating in referenda, standing for elected office and by other means, or can be exercised through freely chosen representatives.
 - c) The will of the people of a country is the basis for the authority of government, and that will must be determined through genuine periodic elections, which guarantee the right and opportunity to vote freely and to be elected fairly through universal and equal suffrage by secret balloting or equivalent free voting procedures, the results of which are accurately counted, announced and respected. A significant number of rights and freedoms, processes, laws and institutions are therefore involved in achieving genuine democratic elections.
2. Methodological and systemic activities of the election observers, both international and citizen, help protect the right to participate in genuine elections. International documents, most notably the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document, recognize that that “the presence of observers, both foreign and domestic, can enhance the electoral process for States in which elections are taking place.” Transparency of the process, public confidence in the election results, and the ability of the citizens of express their will without pressure, threats or intimidation is a pre-condition for peaceful transition of power in any country. Genuinely democratic elections conducted with respect to international standards and domestic legislation contribute to the national and international security. Conversely, the absence of accurate and credible assessments of the conduct of elections may create risks for civil confrontation, violations of the

principle of the rule of law and the international order premised on the respect of sovereignty and human rights.

3. International and citizen observer organizations that have endorsed and continue to adhere to the respective declarations of principles of their work, agree on the commonality of goals, basic methods and principles of their activities, as well as the values that underlie their work. They agree that systematic co-ordination of their activities, while premised on a variety of credible methodologies, can create a range of possibilities for more effective attainment of their individual and common objectives throughout the electoral cycle.
4. Exchange of experience, good practice and methodology encourages both international and citizen observers to advance their methods of work. Direct communication between these groups and individual organizations, both during a specific electoral process and between the elections, promotes their adaptation to the emerging challenges, including through use of new technologies for observation.
5. Co-ordination of efforts between international and citizen observers during the elections, combined with the ability of international observers to credibly inform the international community about specific incidents, helps protect citizen observer organizations from attacks and helps alleviate politically motivated aggression against them.
6. Attention of international observer organizations to the previous assessments and recommendations of citizen organizations helps international observers better understand the context in which the elections are taking place, the underlying legislative process and take into account violations taking place in the pre-electoral period. Regular communication between citizen and international organizations is particularly important at the stage when observation needs are assessed and established.
7. Attention of the citizen observer organizations to previous assessments and recommendations of international observers helps citizen observers in their work to promote adherence of elections in their countries to international standards, obligations and good practice.
8. Systemic co-operation between the elections enhances monitoring of the implementation of recommendations by the authorities of the respective countries and increases the effectiveness of advocacy for the purpose of bringing electoral legislation and practice closer in line with international standards and obligations for protection of fundamental rights and implementation of international good practice as the result of electoral reform.
9. International and citizen observer organizations recognize the potential of mutual co-operation and dialogue for adaptation of the ways in which elections are organized and observed in the times of pandemic, cyber-security threats and other global challenges. International observers recognize the value of inclusive dialogue with citizen observers in the process of developing and adapting international obligations and standards for democratic elections.