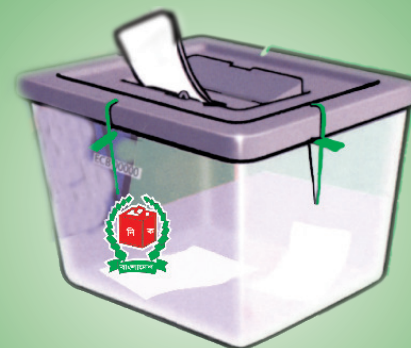




Bangladesh Election Commission
Election Commission Secretariat
Nirbachon Bhabon. Agargoan, Dhaka
www.ecs.gov.bd

GUIDELINES FOR ELECTION OBSERVATION (For International Observers)



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November 2018
Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Department of Public Relations
Election Commission Secretariat**

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**GUIDELINES FOR
ELECTION OBSERVATION
(For International Observers)**

In pursuance of the provision of 91C of the Representation of the People Order, 1972 Bangladesh Election Commission is pleased to make and promulgate the following guidelines for International Election Observers.

1. Short Title and Commencement:

- (1) These guidelines may be called the Guidelines for Election Observation (For International Observers)
- (2) It shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions:

In these guidelines for observers, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context the following terms and definitions shall apply:

- a. "Commission" means the Bangladesh Election Commission within the meaning of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh;
- b. "Electoral process" means all aspects of the election process and all election technologies including, but not limited to, nomination of candidates, campaigning, polling, counting, and announcing results;
- c. "Election Observer" means a person or a group or an organization permitted in writing by the Commission or by any person authorised by the Commission to observe any elections under the Representation of the People Order, 1972 or any other Act conducted by Bangladesh Election Commission.

3. Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC)

3.1 Establishment of the Commission

As per the Constitution, there shall be an Election Commission for Bangladesh consisting of the Chief Election Commissioner and not more than four Election Commissioners. Subject to the provision of the Constitution, the term of office of an Election Commissioner shall be five years from the date on which he enters upon his office.

3.2 Functions of the Election Commission

According to Article 119 of the Constitution the superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of the electoral rolls for elections to the office of the President and to Parliament and the conduct of such elections vest in the Election Commission which shall, in accordance with this Constitution and any other law -

- (a) hold elections to the Office of President;
- (b) hold elections of Members of Parliament;
- (c) delimit the constituencies for the purpose of elections to Parliament; and
- (d) prepare electoral rolls for the purpose of elections to the office of the President and to Parliament.

The Election Commission shall also perform such functions specified by this Constitution or by any other law.

The Election Commission conducts the following elections prescribed by the laws:

City Corporation

Zilla Parishad,

Upazila Parishad

Municipality

Union Council

Hill District Council

The Commission has also been assigned the responsibility of management and control of all matters concerning national identity registration.

3.3 Parliament Elections

After independence in 1971, ten National Parliamentary Elections were held in Bangladesh in 1973, 1979, 1986, 1988, 1991, 1996, 1996, 2001, 2008, 2014 respectively.

3.4 Election Commission Secretariat

Bangladesh Election Commission has an independent full-fledged Secretariat to provide all kind of supports to carry out its mandated tasks and responsibilities effectively. The Secretariat is headed by a Secretary.

It has its offices upto district and sub-district level throughout the country. Total human resources consist of 3000 approximately officials and staff.

3.5 Electoral Roll

Bangladesh Election Commission maintains a voter database with their related information including biometric features. As in January 2018, there are 100.42 million voters in the database. The Election Commission updates the voter database every year. Besides, the left out eligible citizens can enroll their names as voter throughout the year.

Now the Election Commission is also updating the voter's information with their 10 finger print and iris impression.

3.6 Delimitation

For the purpose of holding National Parliamentary Election of three hundred Members of Parliament, the country has been divided into three hundred single territorial constituencies in accordance with the provision of the Delimitation of Constituencies Ordinance, 1976 (as amended upto date). The main principles are the geographical compactness of areas, administrative convenience and, as far as practicable, the distribution of population.

3.7 List of Laws and Rules Related to Parliamentary Election

1. The Representation of the People Order, 1972
2. The Delimitation of Constituencies Ordinance, 1976
3. The Members of Parliament (Determination of Dispute) Act, 1980
4. The National Parliament (Reserved Women Seat) Election Act, 2004
5. The Code of Conduct for Political Parties and Candidates
6. The Election Conduct Rules, 2008

7. The Election Officials (Special Provisions Act, 1991
8. Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) Rules, 2018

4. Approval and Accreditation Procedure of International Observers

The following procedures shall be followed for approval and accreditation of the International Election Observers:

- A. Application Procedure:
 - I. The international observers intending to observe any election shall apply to the Commission in the prescribed form annexed to the Guidelines. Filled in forms may be sent to the Commission either through e-mail: asad.bec@gmail.com or by fax (880-2-55007566). Local offices of foreign diplomatic missions or regional groups or international organizations may forward the applications directly to the Commission by special messenger or by mail.
 - II. Applications received through e-mail or fax or locally shall be scrutinized by the Election Commission Secretariat and forwarded to the Ministry of Home Affairs of Bangladesh for clearance with a simultaneous copy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of

Bangladesh. The Ministry of Home Affairs shall convey its clearance directly to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under intimation to the Commission.

- III. Subject to clearance by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will instruct the mission abroad concerned for issuing necessary visa. In case of necessity, it may also instruct the Airport Immigration Authority to issue visas on arrival.
- IV. Observers intending to travel from countries, where currently there are no Bangladesh missions, should send their application forms directly to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh which shall then send these applications to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Bangladesh and the Election Commission for further necessary action.

B. Grant of Visa:

- i. Election observers will be granted tourist visa. The validity of visa for long term observers would be for two months while for short term observers the period would be for three weeks.
- ii. Immigration officials at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Dhaka

would mark the 'Election Observer' seal on the passports of the observers.

- iii. Observers travelling from countries where Bangladesh has Diplomatic missions will have to obtain visas prior to their journey. However, in exceptional cases, visa on arrival may be arranged. In such cases procedures prescribed in A.IV need to be followed.
- iv. Observers traveling from countries where Bangladesh does not have any Diplomatic mission will have to obtain their visa from the neighbouring Bangladesh missions or follow the procedure as prescribed at A (iv) above.

5. Airport Help Desk:

An Airport Help Desk would be set up by Airport Immigration Authority 10 (ten) days prior to the actual date of polling for reception and assistance to incoming observers and journalists.

6. Foreign Journalists:

- i. The Foreign Journalists intending to cover the election shall follow the same procedures for obtaining visa as in the case of the observers.
- ii. Ministry of Information will open a Media Center with all modern facilities for transmitting news and messages by

the foreign journalists.

- iii. Upon arrival at the airport, the Airport Help Desk will arrange to establish their contact with the Media Cell which will contact the Election Commission for providing them with identification cards and stickers for vehicles and other necessary documents.

7. Issue of Accreditation Card:

Subject to clearance from the authorities concerned with the necessary approval of the Commission, Department of Public Relations will issue prescribed accreditation cards to each observer. Same procedures will be applicable for issuing the accreditation cards of the foreign journalists.

8. Security:

- i. Ministry of Home Affairs will instruct the concerned Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police concerned to provide necessary security to the foreign observers and journalists during their visit to different polling stations of the country. The sponsoring organizations of the observers and journalists must provide their itinerary of visits well ahead to the Ministry of Home Affairs for ensuring required services. Bangladesh Government or the Election

Commission will not be responsible for any mishap encountered by any such visitor who follows his own program.

- ii. A list of all observers and foreign journalists will be sent to the Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police by the Election Commission and the Ministry of Home Affairs.

9. Health Care:

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare will alert all medical establishments under its control to provide necessary health care to all visiting foreign observers and journalists if such occasions arise during their visit to different Polling Stations throughout the country.

10. Code of Conduct:

International election observation is conducted by intergovernmental and international nongovernmental organizations and associations in order to provide an impartial and accurate assessment of the nature of election processes. Much, therefore, depends on ensuring the integrity of international election observation and, all who are part of these missions, must subscribe and follow this DO's and DON'ts DO's:

DO's:

- Respect sovereignty and international human rights
- Respect the laws of the country and the authority of electoral bodies
- Respect the integrity of the international election observation mission
- Maintain strict political impartiality
- Provide appropriate identification
- Maintain accuracy of the observations and professionalism in drawing conclusions
- Refrain from making comments to the public or the media before the mission speaks
- Cooperate with other election observers
- Maintain proper personal behaviour
- Always display cards provided by Bangladesh Election Commission
- Meet the presiding officer first in the polling station
- Follow the lawful directions of the presiding officer
- While counting votes only one observer of each observer group can be present in the counting room

Don'ts:

- Do not enter the place reserved for marking ballot papers
- Do not obstruct election processes
- In the polling center live telecast/air or live on Facebook/twitter or any other social media is highly discouraged

11. Pledge to Follow this Code of Conduct

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

12. Violations of Code of Conduct

In case of an allegation 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, 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.

13. Observation Report

Foreign election observers have to submit an election observation report within 15 days from the date of the election day by

email or hard copy addressing the Secretary of the Election Commission Secretariat. The report should be prepared based on the information of pre poll, poll day and post poll observations.

14. Some Vital Information:

Official Name of the Country	People's Republic of Bangladesh
Independence	1971 (From Pakistan)
Capital	Dhaka
Land Area	1,47,570 sq.km
Boundary	North - India West - India East - India and Myanmar South - Bay of Bengal
Administrative Units	Division - 8, District - 64, Upazila/Thana-519 City Corporations-11, Municipalities-329, Union Parishads-4571
Populations	162.7 Million (1 July 2017)
Voters	104 Million
GDP	7.28 (FY-2016-17)
Per-capita Income	1610 US\$ (FY-2016-17)

Unit of Currency	Taka. Bank note denomination: 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 500, 1000 • US\$ 1 = BDT 84.2 • EUR 1 = BDT 98.3 International credit cards are accepted in most of the hotels, restaurants and shopping centers.
Time	GMT+6.00 hours
Weather	Weather in Dhaka is relatively dry and pleasant during October-December. The temperature would range between 12°C (at night) to 26°C (during the day). At the end of December and the first half of January deep fog and drizzling may be seen at the northern part of Bangladesh.
Dial Code	International dial code: +880
Important Phone Numbers	Police: 999 Police (RAB): (+88.02) 8963419, 8963420
Security, Fire Service, Ambulance	Fire Service: (+88.02) 9555555, 9556666 Ambulance: (+88.02) 9330188, 9330189

Hospitals	Dhaka Medical College Hospital: 02 5516 5001 BSMMU: 02 5516 5794 BIREDEM: 02 9665 003 Apollo Hospitals Dhaka: ((02) 8431661- 5 Hotline :10678 Square Hospital: 02 814 4400 Lab-Aid: 02 58610 793 United Hospital: 02 8836 000
Visiting Places in Dhaka	National Parliament House, Bangladesh National Museum, Liberation War Museum, Ahsan Manzil, Dhakeshwari Temple, Lalbagh Fort, Mughal old Dhaka town, Shahid Minar.
Passport and Visa	Prior to Travel or on Arrival It is mandatory to obtain visa for Bangladesh. In order to find out visa requirement for Bangladesh, please check www.immi.gov.bd . To download the visa application form, go to: www.immi.gov.bd/docs/visaform.pdf . If the participant is from a country with which Bangladesh has on arrival visa agreement or where Bangladesh does not have a Resident Mission, on arrival visa will be arranged upon prior information to Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). All foreigners entering Bangladesh must have a passport validity for not less than 6 months on the date of entry.

ANNEX: I PLEDGE FORM

PLEDGE TO BE SIGNED BY FOREIGN ELECTION OBSERVERS

I have read and understood the Code of Conduct for International Election Observer that was provided to me by the international election observation mission. I hereby pledge that I will follow the Code of Conduct and that all of my activities as an election observer will be conducted completely in accordance with it. I have no conflicts of interest, political, economic nor other, that will interfere with my ability to be an impartial election observer and to follow the Code of Conduct.

I will maintain strict political impartiality all the time. I will make my judgments based on the highest standard for accuracy of information and impartiality of analysis, distinguishing subjective factors from objective evidence, and I will base all of my conclusions on factual and verifiable evidence.

I will not obstruct the election process. I will respect national laws and the authority of election officials and will maintain a respectful attitude toward electoral and other national authorities. I will respect and promote the human rights and fundamental

freedoms of the people of the country. I will maintain proper personal behaviour and respect others, including exhibiting sensitivity for Bangladeshi cultures and customs, exercise sound judgment in personal interactions and observe the highest level of professional conduct all the time, including leisure time.

I will protect the integrity of the international election observation mission and will follow the instructions of the observation mission. I will attend all briefings, trainings and debriefings required by the election observation mission and will cooperate in the production of its statements and reports as requested. I will refrain from making personal comments, observations or conclusions to the news media or the public before the election observation mission makes a statement, unless specifically instructed otherwise by the observation mission's leadership.

Signature

Name

Organisation

Date

ANNEX : II APPLICATION FORM

Bangladesh Election Commission
Election Commission Secretariat
Nirbachon Bhabon. Agargoan, Dhaka
www.ecs.gov.bd

Election Observer Application Form
(For International Observer)

1. Name :

2. Delegation/Group/Country :

.....

3. Passport Details: Number :

.....

Date of expiry :

4. Nationality :

5. Address in Bangladesh :

7. E-mail :

8. Phone (if available) :

By signing this application, I hereby confirm that, I will respect the Guidelines issued by Bangladesh Election Commission for the role of the International Election Observer. And I confirm that, the Election Commission has the right to reject my accreditation.

Date :

Signature

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