



PAFFREL

Discussion on the Integrity of the Electoral Process

The following issues were identified during the last Elections held in 2010.

1. Voter Registration and Identification

- The 2008 voters list was applied instead of applying the 2009 voters list for the Presidential and Parliament Elections.
- Persons, who have completed 19+ did not get the opportunity to franchise their votes.
- Considerable number of voters could not franchise their votes due to identity card issues.

Recommendation:

- We need a process to review experience, streamline activities in line with e-government for registration and updating lists with clear guidelines about which voter list is applicable for what election.
- The preparation of accurate voters' lists by ensuring that all those eligible are able to vote.
- To create a system to apply and register immediately and effectively after persons completing 18 years old.
- Instead of updating annual to setup a system to update once in ten years or life time.
- Introduce voter identification cards for those who do not have national identity cards for ten years or life time.

2. Selecting Candidates

- Political parties did not adopt a set of accepted criteria for selecting candidates.

Recommendation:

- Can we collectively establish quality standards for candidates and their performance in office, role of civil society issue report cards on performance, comparing stated goals of political representatives and their respective parties (e.g. their manifestos plans)
- The political parties should consider providing a quota system guaranteeing greater women/youth's participation as candidates in the electoral process. Political parties should adopt a set of accepted criteria for selecting party candidates.

3. Campaigning and Finance Regulations

- During the Presidential and Parliament Elections the candidates and political parties utilized unlimited funds for campaigning.
- Election Commissioner's guidelines were not followed.
- Candidates and political parties did campaigns even during the cooling period.

Recommendation:

- Greater transparency and accountability of Political parties, Candidates, and independent groups regarding campaign contributions, expenses, funding sources and self imposed funding limits during election period.
- The Election Commissioner should have authority to implement and enforce campaign regulations in a consistent and impartial manner.
- Setting of an official date for elections, campaigning period and to grant power to the Elections Commissioner / Department to do so.

4. Procedures for Complaints and Appeals

- Inter-party violations were high during the election period.
- When complaints were lodged legal action was not taken immediately during election period.

Recommendation:

- To establish a Complaints Unit under the guidance and authority of the Elections Commissioner to take action and assist the candidates, political parties and voters.
- The law should specify realistic time frames for complaints about election malpractices and appeals to be submitted (to Election Commission) and for decision to be reached.

5. Election Administration

- The IDPs and specially the disabled persons did not have sufficient facilities to franchise their votes even after Election Commissioner made arrangements.
- Recommend to have transparent ballot boxes.
- Most of the candidates and political parties did not declare assets etc., when they submitted their nomination according to the regulations.

Recommendation:

- All human rights - An election process should carryout in an environment in which the people can fully enjoy all its political rights and freedom to vote.
- Voter's rights, opportunities and facilities – Including the participation of persons with disabilities, minorities, women, IDPs / refugees etc.

- To empower the Independent Elections Commission is vital for ensuring that elections are conducted in a democratic manner according to international standards.
- PAFFREL ▶ Voter confidentiality and ballot secrecy must be safeguarded. Supervision at polling centers for postal voting should be conducted by staff of the Elections Department and not by the Officer in Charge of police stations or by Commanders of Security Camps.
- If continued use of ballot boxes is going to be made, these should be made of translucent materials for greater transparency and credibility.
- The right of Domestic Observers should be made a requirement of elections laws and must include observation of the counting process.
- The preferential voting system based on the proportionate representation system should be revised to minimize intra-party rivalry.

6. Misuse of State Power and Resources

- There were no effective system to control misuse of State power and resources.
- Role of Security Forces – Certain senior Police Officers were transferred just before and during election period.

Recommendation:

- Effective system under the Election Commissioner should be taken to control the misuse of State power and resources.
- The Election Commissioner should have the authority to follow up even after elections.
- Role of Security Forces - Election Commissioner should have the authority to control Law enforcement agencies during the election period in order for them to behave in a neutral manner.

7. Media Regulation

- The state owned and some private media institutions were not impartial and balanced in their news coverage.
- Paid advertising by political parties were not controlled at least by an independent institution.
- There were no limits to political advertising and campaigning on the quantity of paid advertising.
- There were no amount of airtime to the media were permitted to broadcast for each party.

Recommendation:

- The state owned or private media institutions should be responsible and should remain impartial and balanced in their news coverage and to give responsible to the Elections Commissioner to provide clear guidelines and authority control the media during election period.

- Paid advertising by political parties should be under the control of an independent institution. The content of such advertisements must not include inflammatory language. Limits to political advertising campaigns might be imposed on the quantity of paid advertising that parties are permitted to purchase. The amount of airtime the media are permitted to broadcast for each party should be monitored daily.
- PAFFREL**

8. Recall System

Recommendation:

- To consider, If elected candidates do not perform their duties properly, there should be a system to recall them.
- A speedy and effective procedure for election petitions should be devised.