



INSTRUCTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT OF THE ELECTION PROCESS

Introduction

These assessment forms are designed to gain a general impression of the election process of the particular country.

Election Laws

As an assessor, you should have some basic knowledge of the country's election law and the election process at the polling station. This would include: the structure and role of the precinct election commission (PEC); who is eligible to vote; what constitutes the voter list; what identification is permitted; what constitutes a supplemental voter list; ballot security; absentee certificates; privacy booths; the presence of domestic and international observers; the counting process; obtaining a copy of the protocols; as well as where and how results are sent to the Central Election Commission.

Advance Work

The purpose of going two days in advance of election day is to determine voter interest, how candidates, political parties, associations and blocs have been campaigning, how the media has been covering the campaign, as well as the state of the preparations for election day on the part of the election commissions at the subject, district, territorial, and precinct levels.

On your first day on location, obtain a map of the region where you are located. It should be large enough to encompass entire territories, but detailed enough to find polling stations. With what you have learned in your two days at your location, you should choose a territory or part of a territory to cover on election day. Once you have chosen the territory, go to its election commission and get a list of its polling stations. From this list, choose 12-15 polling stations to visit during election day. Familiarize yourself with the assessment forms before going out on election day, so that it will be easier for you to fill out the forms.

Election Day

Find out when the polls open. Plan to arrive at your first polling station at least one hour in advance. Observe the entire poll opening process as well as the first voters voting and complete the assessment forms. Then you should proceed to another 8-11 polling stations during the day. For polling stations that you find troublesome, you may want to return to them later in the day. (If this happens, you will obviously see less than 10 polling stations during the day.) You should also try to accompany a mobile ballot box from a polling site. To assess the closing of the polls and the vote count, you may want to choose the polling station you found most troublesome, and plan to arrive there by 30 minutes prior to the closing time. Assessors should be familiar with some of the common forms of voter fraud and have some knowledge of the routine (minor) mistakes that are often committed by PECs.

Forms

There are three kinds of forms: One is for the opening of the polls, another is for use during election day, and the third is for the counting of the ballots. Try to be as thorough as possible when completing the forms, and complete them while at the polling station. In a few situations, you may find that you can't answer every question. Just do the best you can. By the end of the day, you will probably see the same activities in most polling stations. Record your answers to any open-ended questions or comments on the back of the form or in a notepad, if you do not have enough space on the front of the page. Note any disagreements between commissioners, voters, domestic observers and security. Upon entering the polling station, you should introduce yourself to the Chair and members of the precinct commission and show your credentials.

GENERAL RULES OF OBSERVATION.

1. Be polite and impartial no matter what happens or how you are treated.
 2. Introduce yourself to the Chair and all members of the Commission. Show your identity card from the Central Election Commission.
 3. Do not interfere in the election process. You are there to monitor -not to conduct- the election process.
 4. If you see problems, fraud or mistakes, make a detailed note of them. You may question the chair and others about such mistakes, but you may not order him/her around.
 5. Remove yourself from any dangerous situations immediately.
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QUESTIONS FOR PRE-ELECTION DAYS

Try to get a sense of how the populace feels about the elections.

Do they think they are fair and open?

Do they think the elections make any difference?

Is there active interest in trying to promote democracy and participation in the elections?

Are there viable political parties?

Who are the major political parties in the subject? Are they the same ones in the area you visited?

Is there a candidate or party that appears to be more dominant in this area?

If yes, which ones?

Does there appear to be much interest in the election?

Is the governor (or leader of the subject) a dominant factor in the election?

Is the mayor or some other locally elected official a dominant factor in the election?

Is the mass media coverage equal among all the candidates?

Are the elections commissions (i.e. subject, territorial, and precinct) prepared for the elections? Do they know the changes to the Basic Guarantees Law and the new Duma Election Law?

IFES ASSESSMENT FORM

POLL OPENING

THIS FORM IS TO BE USED FOR THE OPENING OF THE POLLS ONLY

Name of assessor _____

Polling Site _____

Please arrive at the polling station at 30 minutes before the polls open and stay until you have observed the first few voters place their ballots in the ballot box. After observing the opening go on to your next polling station.

Time of Arrival _____

Time of Departure _____

Number of Precinct Commissioners present: # _____

What is the background/who is serving as Precinct Commissioners at this polling site?

Are there observers other than yourself? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, how many and who do they represent (candidate, party, etc.)

Are there security guard/police present? Yes _____ No _____

Is the polling station well organized for the flow of voters and for observers to view the voting process?
Yes _____ No _____

Are the PEC member work assignments resulting in bottlenecks? Yes _____ No _____

Please describe _____

What time was the first voter served? _____ How many voters are in line at 8:00? _____

Are there some kind of privacy booths? Yes _____ No _____ How many? # _____

Where are the Unused ballots with no seal or signatures being stored? _____

Are they secure? Yes _____ No _____

Where are the signed and stamped Unused ballots being stored? _____

How many are there? # _____

Were the empty precinct and mobile ballot boxes shown to everyone present before it was sealed?

Yes _____ No _____

How many voters are on the voter list at the time of your visit? # _____

Were any additions or deletions made to the voter list prior to election day? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, how many? _____ additions _____ deletions On what basis
were the decisions made to add or delete voters?

How are voters who requested absentee voting certificates noted on the voter list?

How many voters have been issued absentee voting certificates form this polling station? # _____

Are voters with absentee voter certificates from another precinct or territory being allowed to vote?

Yes _____ No _____

If voters are not on the voter list, are they allowed to vote?

Yes _____ No _____

For voters not on the voter list, what documentation is required before the PEC will add him/her to the voter list and issue a ballot?

How many people were denied the right to vote for failure to have proper identification # _____

At the time of your departure, how many people have cast a ballot? # _____

IFES ASSESSMENT FORM

DURING ELECTION DAY

THIS FORM IS TO BE USED FOR THE POLLING STATIONS YOU VISIT AFTER POLL OPENING AND BEFORE POLL CLOSING. TRY TO SEE AT LEAST 10 POLLING STATIONS DURING THE DAY. COMPLETE A SEPARATE FORM FOR EACH POLLING STATION.

Name of assessor _____

Polling Station _____

Time of Arrival _____

Time of Departure _____

Are there people outside trying to campaign? Yes ___ No ___

If so, for what candidate, political association or bloc is each of them campaigning?

Comments:

_____ *Are there any election posters displayed in*
or outside of the polling site? Yes ___ No ___ (please describe)

How many voters are on the voter list at the time of your visit? # _____

Were any additions or deletions made to the voter list prior to election day? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, how many? _____ additions _____ deletions

On what basis were the decisions made to add or delete voters?

Have any voters not been allowed to vote, and if so, how many? # _____

What were the reasons?

How are voters who requested absentee voting certificates noted on the voter list?

_____ How many voters have
been issued absentee voting certificates from this polling station? # _____

Are voters with absentee voter certificates from another precinct or territory being allowed to vote?

Yes ___ No ___

If voters are not on the voter list, are they allowed to vote? Yes ___ No ___

For voters not on the voter list, what documentation is required before the PEC will add him/her to the voter list and issue a ballot?

How many people were denied the right to vote for failure to have proper identification # _____

Are voters asked to show identification? Yes _____ No _____

What kind of identification is being shown? _____

Is anyone voting who did not show identification? Yes _____ No _____

(Ask the Precinct Commission Chair for his/her explanation about allowing someone without identification to vote.)

When are signatures and the precinct seal stamped on each ballot _____

Are voters conferring with each other prior to marking their ballot? Yes _____ No _____

Are there attempts at family voting? Yes _____ No _____

Are voters placing their own ballot in the ballot box? Yes _____ No _____

If a voter made a mistake marking the ballot, what does the PEC do with the spoiled ballot?

Having turned in a spoiled ballot, is the voter given a second ballot? Yes _____ No _____

Are people attempting to obtain ballots for other voters? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, are they successful? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what is the Precinct Chair's explanation? _____

At the time of your arrival, how many people have cast a ballot? # _____

On the average, how long is it taking for each voter to cast a ballot? (from the time they walk into the polling station)

How many voters have applied to vote outside the polling station via the mobile box? # _____

Did you accompany the PEC members when they took the mobile ballot box to voters voting outside the Polling Station? Yes _____ No _____

If you did, please describe what occurred.

Overall, on a scale of 1 to 10 with one representing perfect and 10 very poor, how would you rate the voting process at this poll? _____

Voter Interview: please interview a few voters after they have cast their ballots. Ask them:

How did you find out about voting at this site?

Voter 1 _____

Voter 2 _____

Voter 3 _____

Do you have recommendations to make about the voting process?

Voter 1 _____

Voter 2 _____

Voter 3 _____

Assessor:

Please write your comments and suggestions regarding this polling station, including recommendations for improvement on the back of this form.

IFES ASSESSMENT FORM

POLL CLOSING AND VOTE COUNT

THIS FORM IS TO BE USED FOR THE CLOSING OF THE POLLS AND THE VOTE COUNT

Name of assessor _____

Polling Station _____

Please arrive at the polling station at least 30 minutes before the polls close and stay until the protocol has been signed and finally completed. Please indicate the time of arrival and departure of observation. Again, make sure you introduce yourself politely and show your credentials.

Time of Arrival _____

Time of Departure _____

How many voters are in line at 20:00 waiting to vote? # _____

How many voters are on the voter list? # _____

How many voters are on the supplementary list? # _____

Were any additions or deletions made to the voter list prior to election day? Yes ____ No ____
If yes, how many? _____ additions _____ deletions

On what basis were the decisions made to add or delete voters?

Have any voters not been allowed to vote, and if so, how many? # _____ What were the reasons?

How are voters who requested absentee voting certificates noted on the voter list?

How many voters have been issued absentee voting certificates *from* this polling station? # _____

Were voters with absentee voter certificates from another precinct or territory allowed to vote?

Yes ____ (how many # ____) No ____ (how many # ____)

If voters are not on the voter list, are they allowed to vote? Yes ____ No ____

For voters not on the voter list, what documentation is required before the PEC will add him/her to the voter list and issue a ballot?

How many people were denied the right to vote for failure to have proper identification # _____

What time did voting end? _____

Did the PEC void the unused ballots by cutting the right bottom corners? Yes _____ No _____

Where are the unused ballots being stored? _____

Did the PEC count the unused ballots? Yes _____ No _____ # of unused ballots _____

Were the ballot boxes unsealed in the presence of all commissioners and observers? Yes _____ No _____

COUNTING THE BALLOTS

Did anyone other than the PEC commissioners help in the counting process? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, who were these people? _____

If yes, what is the chairman's explanation for this?

Do the members of the commission appear to know the procedures? Yes _____ No _____

Does the polling place appear orderly? Yes _____ No _____

Do the PEC members appear to know how to count the votes and complete the protocols?

Yes _____ No _____

Are observers able to stand close enough to see the marks on the ballots and to see on which pile the ballots are being placed? Yes _____ No _____

What method of counting did the PEC use? Tally _____ Stacking _____

How many valid ballots were cast at this polling station? # _____

Did the voted ballots have the seal of the PEC stamped on them? Yes _____ No _____

Were they signed by at least two PEC members? Yes _____ No _____

How many invalid ballots were cast at this polling station # _____

What are the characteristics of the invalid ballots?

After the counting, were the ballots put into sealed containers? Yes _____ No _____

Who completed the protocols? _____

Did s/he complete the protocols by pen or pencil? _____

Were the protocols temporarily brought somewhere else, (e.g. the TEC) before being completed by pen at the polling site? Yes _____ No _____

Was everyone present given the opportunity to record the results from the protocol? Yes _____ No _____

If no, what is the chairman's explanation for this?

Which members of the PEC delivered the protocols to the TEC? _____

What time did the PEC members leave the polling station to take the protocols to the TEC? _____

On a scale of one to ten with one representing poor management and ten representing perfect administration of the polling station, please rate the PEC overall for its close of poll practices: _____

Did you notice anything unusually good or unusually disturbing about this polling station?

Please describe on the reverse side any major violations of the election law you observed or heard about, and any other comments you may have about this particular polling station. You may also include any recommendations for improving procedures.

Also, please obtain a certified copy of the protocol or write the complete results from the protocol on the reverse side.