



HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

**BOX 1**  
**(b)**

**CPA UK HANDBOOK**

**FOR ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSIONS**



**CPA** COMMONWEALTH  
PARLIAMENTARY  
ASSOCIATION  
BRITISH ISLANDS & MEDITERRANEAN REGION

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION UK





CPA UK HANDBOOK  
FOR ELECTION  
OBSERVATION MISSIONS

**First Edition**

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Designed by Matthew Salik



## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK (CPA UK) works to strengthen parliamentary democracy and enhance good governance through international parliamentary outreach, parliamentary diplomacy and parliamentary strengthening. Over the last five years CPA UK has organised short term Election Observer Missions (EOMs) and Election Assessment Missions (EAMs), and has supported a number of organisations in sourcing observers to participate in missions across the Commonwealth. CPA UK provides the secretariat for the CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) and leads on the organisation of regional activities.

CPA UK's regular election observation activities began in 2010 when it worked in partnership with the Royal Commonwealth Society to bring a cohort of Commonwealth parliamentarians to the UK to observe the General Election. The following year CPA UK ran its first EOM in the Virgin Islands (UK) in partnership with CARICOM, and thereafter its annual programme has included organising and supporting election observation and assessment missions. Its missions are conducted to the highest standards in partnership with regional and international organisations.

### CPA UK/BIMR election observation methodology

This handbook outlines CPA UK's and CPA BIMR's election observation methodology and describes how EOMs and EAMs are planned, deployed and implemented. It has been developed as a practical guide for observers, partner organisations and other stakeholders, and should be used as a reference to ensure that election observation is conducted credibly, consistently and to the highest possible standard.

CPA UK is committed to ensuring a professional approach based on observation of all aspects of the electoral process in accordance with international obligations, commitments and standards for democratic elections. The methodology outlined in this handbook draws on best international practices, particularly those developed by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) and the European Union (EU).

Election observation expresses the Commonwealth's interest in promoting democratic elections within its wider policy of support for democracy, the rule of law and human rights. It also serves to reinforce other key Commonwealth objectives, notably peace-making and peacebuilding and complements other Commonwealth crisis management and peacebuilding initiatives.

### CPA International



The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is an active network of over 17,000 parliamentarians from Commonwealth parliaments and legislatures (national, sub-national and overseas territories). Through dialogue, it seeks to foster cooperation and understanding between parliaments, promote good parliamentary practice and advance parliamentary democracy. A truly global body, the CPA comprises over 170 Branches across 6 continents and in over 50 countries worldwide.

### CPA UK

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION UK



CPA UK is one of the largest and most active branches in the CPA community, and delivers a full programme of international parliamentary activities in Westminster and overseas. Governed by an Executive Committee of parliamentarians from all main parties, CPA UK's work includes parliamentary diplomacy and parliamentary strengthening on behalf of the UK Parliament and the wider CPA. Its activities include conferences, seminars, workshops and inter-parliamentary exchanges on parliamentary practice and procedure, policy

and issues of international interest and concern.

Each activity is designed to give parliamentarians and parliamentary staff practical, current and first-hand perspective.

#### **CPA BIMR**



The British Islands and Mediterranean Region is one of nine regional groupings of the CPA. Its purpose is to promote knowledge and understanding of constitutional, legislative, economic, social and cultural aspects of parliamentary democracy within the Commonwealth. By promoting close relations and cooperation between its branches and other CPA regions, the BIMR works to build informed parliamentary communities within the Region and across the Commonwealth. Two of its focal activity streams are promoting gender equality through the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians network (BIMR CWP) and strengthening democracy through EOMs.

## **What CPA UK/BIMR can offer?**

CPA UK utilises networks and partnerships cultivated across and beyond the Commonwealth to assist in running its missions. As a parliamentary organisation CPA UK brings together experienced parliamentarians, specialist NGOs and other related professionals to conduct high quality and comprehensive EOMs.

### **1. Parliamentarians**

The participation of parliamentarians as observers is a key asset CPA UK brings to EOMs. Parliamentarians can offer credibility and visibility to missions. CPA UK sources parliamentarians from a cross-section of political and parliamentary backgrounds, all with some degree of election experience. This diversity and knowledge engenders a balanced and objective approach. Associated training, briefings and participation assists observers' professional development.

For elections in the Caribbean, Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, observers are mainly sought from the BIMR and Caribbean and Americas region. Observers from legislatures of a similar size to the election setting provide relevant perspective and understanding.

### **2. Organisational efficiency**

CPA UK has a successful record of planning and deploying EOMs, usually within relatively short timescales. Its secretariat of trained and experienced staff provide first-class management and organisational support throughout EOM projects.

### **3. Comprehensive and compact missions**

CPA UK has developed its customised methodology, incorporating international standards, good practice and codes of conduct into smaller, short-term missions in keeping with the size of the electorate. CPA UK EOMs frequently take place in territories with fewer than 30,000 voters; however they observe all aspects of the election process. Missions usually have a relatively short in-country deployment period, yet incorporate all aspects of the election process.

## **Importance of democratic elections**

A genuine, democratic election is a critical element of the democratic process that provides voters with an informed choice between political alternatives. It must take place in an environment of political pluralism, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, adherence to the rule of law, a level-playing field for political contestants, public confidence in the process, transparency and accountability. A genuine democratic election also provides individuals and groups with the opportunity to express their political voice in competition with their opponents without resort to violence and enables the peaceful transfer of political power.

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## Aim and importance of election observation

Credible election observation involves a comprehensive, independent and impartial assessment of an electoral process to evaluate the extent to which it complies with international obligations, commitments and standards for democratic elections. Through this, it can promote transparency and accountability, deter fraud and enhance public confidence and participation in the electoral process. This in turn, can strengthen democratic institutions and reduce the potential for election-related violence, contributing to ensuring peace and stability.

## Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation

CPA UK election observation methodology endorses and adheres to the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, which was endorsed by a broad range of organisations conducting international election observations at the United Nations in New York in 2005. The Declaration stresses such principles as the grounding of election observation in international human rights law, the need to establish minimum conditions for credible observation and the important role of citizen election observation.

## How to use this handbook

This handbook is structured to provide easy access to specific materials of the most immediate interest to observers, partners and interested stakeholders. Part two covers the organisation of CPA UK EOMs, part three provides an overview of international obligations, commitments and principles for democratic elections. Part four covers observing and assessing the pre-election period, part five covers observing and assessing the election day period. Part six looks at reporting and follow up.

***“I found the opportunity to serve as a member of an Election Observer Mission a real privilege. There is great satisfaction in bringing one’s own election and parliamentary experience to the service of people in another country, knowing that the Mission’s report might well be a crucial factor in giving them confidence in their own democratic process.*”**

***CPA BIMR deserves its growing reputation for the impartial reporting and for the sound recommendations which such Missions produce, and I heartily recommend Commonwealth political colleagues to become involved.”***

Hon. Steve Rodan SHK, Speaker of the House of Keys, Isle of Man  
Head of Mission - Commonwealth Parliamentary Association British Islands and Mediterranean Region,  
EOM Virgin Islands (UK), 2015

VOTE



X



Ellis  
Webster



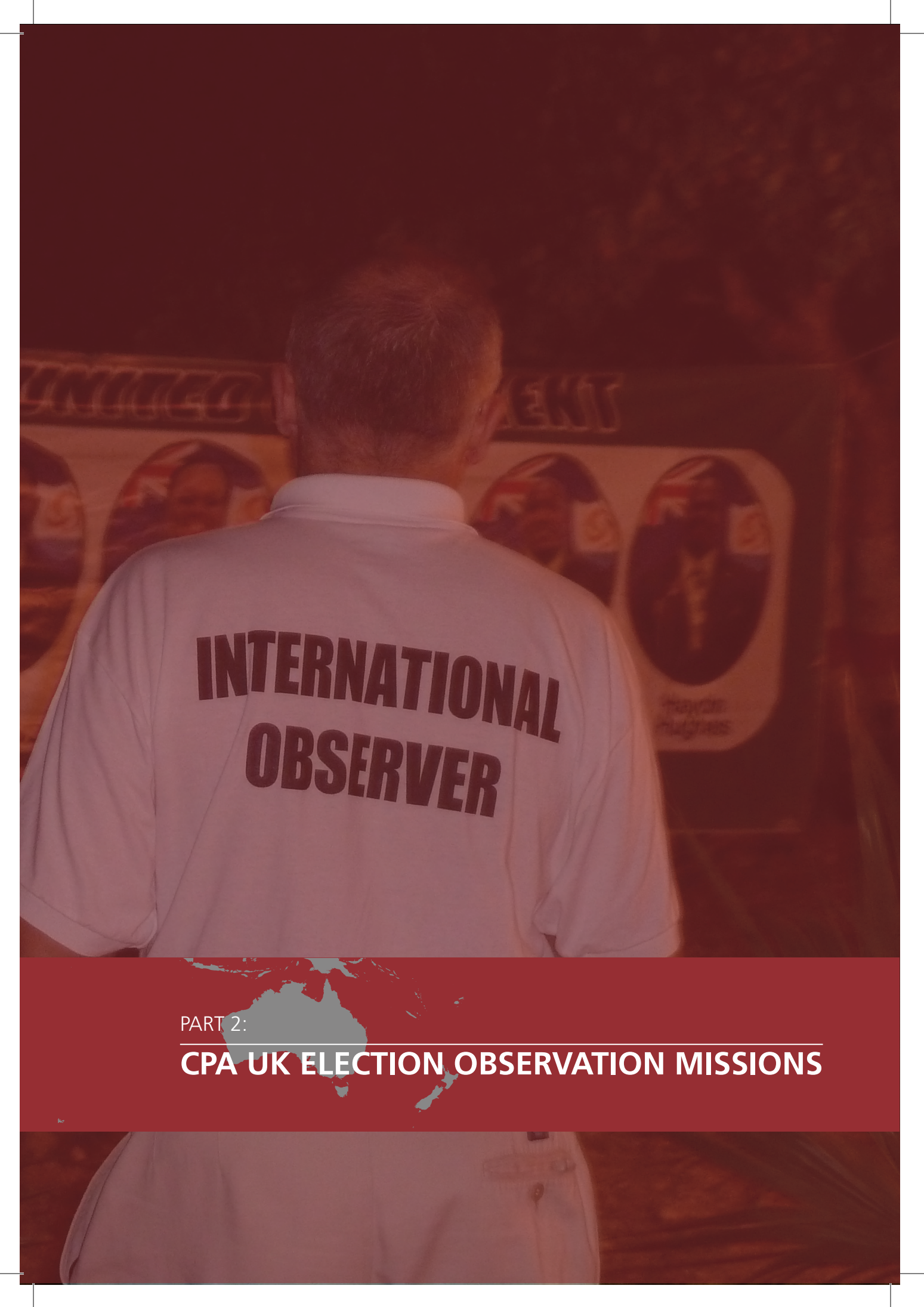
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*"Roots of Integrity, Trunk of*  
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**INTERNATIONAL  
OBSERVER**

PART 2:

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## **CPA UK ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSIONS**

### CPA UK's EOMs vs EAMs What is the difference?

CPA UK defines an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) as a very short mission comprising less than a week of deployment, covering election day and only one or two days before and after. An EAM will only examine the administration of election day as opposed to the entire election period. An Election Observation Mission (EOM), on the other hand, will observe the entire election process as detailed in this handbook.

CPA UK conducts EAMs as part of its parliamentary strengthening programmes, to enhance the skills and capacity of parliamentarians as election observers.

### Invitation and decision-making process

To observe an election, CPA UK must first receive an invitation from a country or territory. The invitation must be approved by the Government and Opposition and in some cases the Election Management Body (EMB) such as an Election Commission. Once received, an assessment will be undertaken to consider whether deployment of an EOM would be useful, feasible and advisable, and to assess whether the following minimum conditions exist for credible election observation:

- unimpeded access to all stages of the election process, all persons concerned with the electoral process and all electoral information in a timely manner
- freedom of movement around the country/territory
- provision of accreditation in a timely manner
- non-interference in activities of the EOM, including its size, selection of observers and national staff, and deployment timeframe
- sufficiently stable security situation for observers to be deployed and, if required, provision of acceptable security arrangements for the mission
- freedom to issue, without interference, public statements and reports
- guarantee that no pressure, threats or reprisals will be made against any national or foreign citizen who work for, assist or provide information to the mission.

The absence of any of the minimum conditions may lead to an EOM not being deployed. A mission can be withdrawn if problems with these conditions arise.

### Scoping visit

Occasionally an advance scoping visit led by CPA UK staff, will be sent to the country/territory to assess whether the minimum conditions are in place to deploy a mission. When scoping visits are not possible or practical, CPA UK will use in-country sources to obtain the information to make this assessment.

### Memorandums of understanding

Following a decision taken by CPA UK's Chief Executive (CPA BIMR's Regional Secretary) to deploy a mission, CPA UK will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the state and electoral authorities of the host country/territory. These outline the role and responsibilities of the EOM and the role and responsibilities of the host country/territory, including the guarantees outlined above. CPA UK will also prepare terms of reference, which include the composition, tasks, timeframe and budget of the EOM.

### Independence

All CPA UK missions must be strictly impartial and not show bias towards any side in an electoral process. No offers of assistance or support should be accepted that could compromise their independence or be perceived as partisan. All CPA UK EOMs and EAMs are independent in their findings and conclusions and will base their findings only on accurate and credible information, reporting on the conduct of the process, not on the political outcome of the results. CPA UK observers should not interfere in the electoral process. They may bring problems to the attention of the election authorities, but should not intervene to correct or otherwise influence proceedings.

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## Comprehensive analysis

CPA UK's election observation methodology covers all aspects of an election process, including assessment of the legal framework, registration of voters, registration of political parties and candidates, campaign, media coverage, voting, counting, tabulation, and complaints and appeals. It also includes assessment of the participation of women, minorities and persons with disabilities in the electoral process, which should be mainstreamed in mission reporting.

Assessment of an election does not involve comparison between countries or territories. Where elements of an electoral process take place before CPA UK observers are deployed, an assessment can still be made as to the extent laws and procedures are implemented by information obtained from interlocutors. If a CPA UK EOM is able to observe the electoral process only partially, this should be explained in reports prepared by the mission.

## Relations with host country/territory

CPA UK EOMs will establish working relations with the state authorities of the host country/territory in which they are observing. Upon arrival, the Head of Mission will hold introductory meetings with the invitation issuing authority, the EMB and senior election stakeholders. Introductory meetings may also be held with the Head of State and/or Head of Government, former Leader of the Opposition and the Speaker/Presiding Officer of Parliament (or appropriate legislative body). CPA UK EOMs will respect and adhere to the laws of the country/territory being observed.

## Timetable

The following indicative schedule of activities is based on a single election round, but can be extended if there are more rounds, or if additional coverage is required as a result of post-election developments, such as complaints and appeals.

### 6 - 4 months prior to election day

- CPA UK may contact the relevant invitation issuing authority to ascertain if a mission may be requested.
- CPA UK will undertake background research to assess whether the minimum conditions are in place for election observation to be undertaken.
- CPA UK takes decision on deployment, in consultation with others as appropriate.

### 4 - 1 months prior to election day

- CPA UK appoints Head of Mission and recruits mission members.
- CPA UK signs MoU with the state and electoral authorities of the host country or territory.
- CPA UK announces the deployment of EOM.
- CPA UK staff make practical arrangements for deployment of mission.
- CPA UK staff in London gather information about the election campaign and media coverage

### 21 - 10 days prior to election day

- CPA UK staff continue to make practical arrangements for deployment of the mission.



- The Core Team (comprising of the Head of Mission, Election/Legal and Political/Campaign Analysts and Election Coordinator) arrive in country/territory and prepare for opening of mission.

#### **10 - 1 days prior to election day**

- Soon after arrival and after introductory meetings, the Head of Mission leads a press conference to formally announce start of mission.
- All mission members present observe pre-election environment, including advance voting campaign and media coverage and hold meetings with election stakeholders.
- Analysts draft election day report forms.
- Analysts and Coordinator organise debriefing on pre-election observation for all mission members.
- Analysts prepare draft preliminary report.
- Analysts and Coordinator provide briefing to any additional mission members who have arrived to observe the election day period.

#### **Election day**

- All mission members observe voting, counting and tabulation.

#### **1 - 2 days after election day**

- Analysts and Coordinator organise debriefing on election day observation for all mission members.
- Head of Mission finalises preliminary report, following discussion with all mission members and consultation and agreement with CPA UK.
- Head of Mission leads press conference to issue preliminary report, which is disseminated electronically to key election stakeholders.
- Mission observes post-election environment, including complaints and appeals.

#### **2 - 4 days after election day**

- Closure and departure of mission.
- Analysts prepare draft final report and recommendations.
- Head of Mission finalises final report, following discussion with all mission members and consultation and agreement with CPA UK.

#### **Up to 2 months after completion of electoral process**

- Final report is publicly released by the Head of Mission.
- Roundtable may be organised in host country/territory to discuss report, in particular recommendations.

#### **3 months after the conclusion of electoral process onwards**

- CPA UK may provide follow-up technical advice and assistance, taking account of EOM recommendations.

### **Members of the mission**

Missions typically adopt of the following structure:

#### **Head of Mission**

The Head of Mission represents the EOM in engagement with a broad range of interlocutors. S/he is responsible for ensuring that the EOM abides by the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, carefully follows

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the CPA UK methodology outlined in this handbook, bases all findings and conclusions on carefully verified factual information, and maintains independence and political neutrality. The Head of Mission also acts as the official spokesperson for the mission and ensures that all mission members are made fully aware of the need to abide by the code of conduct. S/he has responsibility for preparing the preliminary and final reports in consultation with the Analysts, Election Coordinator and CPA UK Secretariat.

### **Election/Legal Analyst**

The Election/Legal Analyst is responsible for assessing the work of election management bodies, voter registration and the procedures for voting, counting and tabulation of results. S/he leads the preparation of observer report forms and analysis of statistics. The Election/Legal Analyst is also responsible for assessing compliance of the legal framework for elections and its implementation with international obligations, commitments and standards for democratic elections and domestic legislation. Together with the Political/Campaign Analyst, the Election/Legal Analyst tracks election-related complaints and appeals and attends court cases when necessary. The Election/Legal Analyst provides advice to the Head of Mission and observers, organises briefings and de-briefings and drafts the preliminary and final reports (including recommendations). S/he is the focal point for relations with the election management body, civil society organisations and the judiciary.

### **Political/Campaign Analyst**

The Political/Campaign Analyst is responsible for assessing political developments and the election campaign. This includes assessing the media environment and coverage provided to contestants, campaign finance issues and tracking incidents or reports of election-related violence. S/he also covers issues related to the participation of women, minorities and persons with disabilities in the electoral process. Together with the Legal/Election Analyst, the Political/Campaign Analyst also provides advice to the Head of Mission and observers, organises briefings and debriefings and drafts the preliminary and final reports (including recommendations). S/he is the focal point for relations with political parties, candidates, media outlets, journalists and civil society organisations.

### **Election Coordinator**

The Election Coordinator, who is a CPA UK staff member, is the EOM's logistical, administrative and communications manager. S/he is responsible for establishing and planning the initial stages of the mission and adhering to the MoU. The Election Coordinator oversees recruitment and deployment of mission members, managing the day-to-day operations of the mission, coordinating logistical support, acting as communications point of contact, collating pre-deployment research including campaign and media coverage, assisting in drafting the preliminary and final reports, and overseeing financial management of the mission.

### **Observers**

Observers are responsible for observing the immediate pre-election day period, as well as voting, counting and tabulation of results in their assigned areas, reporting on their findings accurately and honestly and assisting in drafting the preliminary and final reports. All mission members should act as observers. The number of observers should be determined based upon the size of the country/territory, number of voters, number of polling stations, ease of travel in the

country/territory, security situation, resources available and political significance of the election.

### **Code of conduct**

All members of a CPA UK EOM must adhere to the following key points of the code of conduct that accompanies the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, adopted by international bodies involved in election observation at the UN in 2005. The full code of conduct can be found in Annex 1 and the CPA UK 's code of conduct found in Annex 5.

- Respect sovereignty of the country/territory and international human rights
- Respect the laws of the country/territory and authority of electoral bodies
- Respect the integrity of the EOM
- Maintain strict political impartiality at all times
- Refrain from obstructing the electoral process
- Provide appropriate identification
- Maintain accuracy and professionalism in drawing conclusions
- Refrain from making comments to the public or media about the mission's assessment of the electoral process before the preliminary report is issued
- Cooperate with other election observers
- Maintain proper personal behaviour

In a case of concern about possible code of conduct violations, the Head of Mission should conduct an inquiry into the matter, in consultation with the CPA UK Secretariat. If a serious violation is found to have occurred, the mission member may have their accreditation withdrawn by a joint decision of the Head of Mission and CPA UK's Executive Committee Chair or CPA BIMR's Regional Representatives (whichever is applicable) and be dismissed from the mission.

### **Briefings and de-briefings**

The Election Coordinator will arrange a briefing (in person or communicate remotely) for the Analysts, and if available, the Head of Mission prior to deployment. This should include:

- background to the country/territory
- information on the legal framework and political background to the election
- information on mission members
- information on logistical arrangements
- information on security arrangements

A briefing should be provided for the Head of Mission upon arrival in country/territory by the Analysts and Election Coordinator, and then to other mission members when they arrive. This should cover the same areas as the pre-departure briefing, along with any additional useful information that has been identified. Analysts should organise a debriefing on pre-election day observation for all mission members present and a debriefing on election day observation for all mission members to help prepare the preliminary report.

The Election Coordinator on behalf of CPA UK should arrange a debriefing (in person or communicate remotely), with the Analysts after the mission has closed to:

- review the organisation and conduct of the mission

- 
- identify lessons that can be learned to improve the organisation of future missions
  - discuss the final report, in particular the overall conclusion and recommendations, and discuss follow-up that could be undertaken by CPA UK following the release of the final report.

## Funding

CPA UK seeks to be transparent in communicating its funding arrangements. EOMs to UK Overseas Territories are funded by the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office with additional funding from CPA UK. EAMs to the United Kingdom are funded by CPA UK. However, organisations that co-fund CPA UK missions play no part in planning, deployment, findings and conclusions.

## Accreditation

Accreditation should be provided by CPA UK and the EMB. These passes should be worn at all times. Mission members will also be given branded t-shirts and/or hi-vis jackets, which should be worn when undertaking official observer activities.

## Deployment

**Four key criteria** should be used to determine locations for the field deployment of observers:

1. **Balanced geographical coverage:** observer teams should be deployed in a way that provides a balanced coverage of the country/territory, including urban and rural areas.
2. **Areas of specific relevance:** this may include minority areas or other political hot spots.
3. **Logistics:** observer teams may not be deployed to certain regions if there are logistical problems, such as poor transport, inadequate communication infrastructure, unsuitable accommodation and disproportionate cost implications.
4. **Security:** observer teams should not be deployed to areas where there are significant security risks or where security risks cannot be reasonably managed.

## Coordination with resident diplomatic representatives

The Head of Mission should meet with diplomatic representatives resident in the host country/territory to brief them on EOM methodology, activities and the mission's developing assessment. Such meetings provide an opportunity for dialogue on the electoral process and sharing of relevant information.

## Co-operation with other observers

In line with the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, CPA UK missions should cooperate with observers from other endorsing bodies. They should also liaise closely with citizen election observer groups and welcome information from them on the conduct of the election process, but draw their own assessments and conclusions, independently of citizen groups or any other sources.







A photograph of two women sitting at a white table, working on papers. The woman on the left is wearing a green shirt, and the woman on the right is wearing a yellow shirt and glasses. They are in a room with a white wall and a window. A blue map overlay is visible in the bottom left corner of the image.

PART 3:

## INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS, COMMITMENTS & STANDARDS FOR ELECTIONS

Democracy is about more than just elections. Genuine elections are a necessity for democratic governance because they are the vehicle through which the people of a country/territory freely express their will and thereby provide legitimacy for their elected representatives and institutions. In accordance with best observation practice, CPA UK EOMs will evaluate the credibility of an electoral process by assessing its conduct against international and regional instruments. These provide a clear and common understanding of which political rights and fundamental freedoms need to be adequately met in order for an election to be credible.

By referencing international and regional instruments, CPA UK EOMs can undertake a comprehensive assessment of an electoral process across the entire electoral cycle. Furthermore, the use of such instruments provides a transparent, consistent and legitimate framework for assessing an election.

### **Key international and regional obligations, commitments and standards for elections**

There are numerous international and regional instruments, comprising a mix of legally binding obligations and political commitments which collectively provide a comprehensive framework for assessing an electoral process. The EOM should identify which international and regional instruments the country/territory being observed has ratified or committed to. There are a number of reference tools which help identify those instruments, providing comprehensive information on the various obligations and their application across the electoral cycle. Two notable ones are the *EU's Compendium of International Standards for Elections* and *The Carter Center's Election Obligations and Standards*.

#### **Key universal instruments include:** *(outlined in more detail in Annex II)*

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (1966)
- Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979)
- International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) (1966)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2006)
- United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) (2003)

#### **Key relevant regional instruments include:**

- Commonwealth Charter (2013)
- Trinidad and Tobago Affirmation of Commonwealth Values and Principles (2009)
- Harare Declaration (1991)
- Copenhagen Document (1990) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
- Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) (1950)
- American Convention on Human Rights (AmCHR) (1969)



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## International best practice for elections

In its assessment of an electoral process, an EOM should also make reference to best practice for elections. These are electoral practices which, by the extent of their use internationally, can be considered to facilitate opportunities for democratic elections. While not always specifically referred to in universal or regional instruments, many can be considered essential to a genuine and democratic electoral process.

### Key examples of best practice include:

- transparency in the electoral process
- election administration acts in an effective, impartial, independent and accountable manner
- equal access for candidates and political parties to state resources
- equal access for candidates and political parties to, and balanced coverage by, any state or publicly funded media
- electorate is informed of its rights through civic and voter education programmes
- peaceful atmosphere - free from violence, intimidation or reprisals - for candidates and parties to campaign and for the electorate to vote

## Applying international standards and best practice

The role of an EOM is to assess the conduct of an election against the relevant international and regional obligations, commitments and standards to which a country, and in particular its domestic legislation, has committed itself.

In its reports, the EOM should identify where international standards, obligations and commitments have been met, and where they have not. In most countries/territories, the primary source on the relevant international standards for an election will be the ICCPR, but an EOM should also take account of international obligations, commitments and standards established in the other universal and regional instruments. In countries/territories that have not ratified the ICCPR, or other instruments containing key international standards, reference can still be made to these standards, but it should be pointed out that the country/territory has not yet ratified the instrument in question.

***‘Election monitoring is a powerful tool in promoting democracy, political rights and good governance. Although a relatively new practice in the Overseas Territories, it is increasingly seen as adding real value to the process. The parliamentarians that make up the CPA Observer Missions bring a wealth of relevant experience from a broad range of backgrounds, from across the region and internationally, to work with all stakeholders in ensuring fair elections. The 2015 CPA Observer Mission was the second time a Virgin Islands election had been monitored and was once again deemed to reinforce public trust in the democratic process.’***

H.E. John S. Duncan OBE, Governor of the Virgin Islands (UK)

Table 1 on the following page outlines the key international obligations, commitments and standards, drawn from international and regional instruments. It also includes relevant aspects of the electoral cycle (which covers the elements of the electoral process) and some key indicators/benchmarks which EOMs can use in making their assessment.

| Key Election Obligations, Commitments, Standards and Best Practice | Electoral Cycle (covering the key elements of the electoral process)  | Some key Indicators/Benchmarks  |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Periodic elections</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announcement of election</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Term limits are respected</li> <li>Reasonable notice is given to facilitate organisation of election and conduct campaign</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Genuine election</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Election administration</li> <li>Registration of parties/candidates</li> <li>Election campaign</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EMB is independent, effective and has confidence of stakeholders</li> <li>Election is truly competitive</li> <li>State resources are used appropriately</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Universal suffrage</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal framework</li> <li>Voter registration</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eligibility criteria are inclusive and appropriate</li> <li>Voter list includes all sectors of society including minorities, women and youth</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Equal suffrage</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Election system</li> <li>Boundary demarcation</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electoral system is inclusive and representative</li> <li>The number of seats in each constituency is balanced in terms of population size</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Right to stand for election</b>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Party registration (freedom of association)</li> <li>Candidate registration</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration criteria are reasonable and applied in an inclusive manner</li> <li>Candidate eligibility criteria are reasonable and inclusive</li> <li>Women have the right and opportunity to stand for election and reasonable numbers do so</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Right and opportunity to vote</b>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voter registration</li> <li>Voter ID requirements</li> <li>Provision of and access to adequate polling places</li> <li>Voter education</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those seeking to register are captured on the voter list</li> <li>Voters are aware of how to register and when, where and how to vote</li> <li>Voting arrangements and procedures facilitate participation</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Women's participation</b>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voter registration</li> <li>Candidate registration</li> <li>Electoral system</li> <li>Provision of polling places</li> <li>Appointment of electoral staff</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no legal or procedural barriers to women's participation as candidates and voters</li> <li>Parties have an open attitude to including women as candidates</li> <li>Women are present in good numbers at all levels of the election administration</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Secret vote</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voting procedures</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Polling stations are organised to ensure voters can vote in secret</li> <li>Voters are not coerced when making a choice and there are no financial or other inducements</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Free expression of will of electors</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Election campaign</li> <li>Voter education</li> <li>Election dispute resolution</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voters have access to credible and timely information on political choices and electoral procedures</li> <li>There are no undue obstacles to participation or physical impediments to voting</li> <li>Votes are counted and reported honestly</li> <li>Where required electors are provided with effective legal remedy</li> </ul> |
| <b>Right to an effective legal remedy</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All stages of the electoral cycle</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders are able to seek a timely legal remedy at all stages of the electoral process</li> <li>Election disputes are dealt with in an impartial and transparent way</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Equal treatment</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct of campaign</li> <li>Media coverage</li> <li>Election dispute resolution</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State resources are used appropriately</li> <li>Media, and notably state media, treats contestants equitably</li> <li>Election disputes are resolved in an equal manner</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Freedom of association</b>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration of political parties</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Criteria for party registration are reasonable</li> </ul>  |

|                              |  |   |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Freedom of expression</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election campaign</li> <li>• Media coverage</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no obstacles to contestants gaining access to media coverage</li> <li>• There is generally balanced coverage of the main contestants across media</li> <li>• State media provides balanced and fair coverage</li> <li>• There is no incitement in the media</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Freedom of movement</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election administration</li> <li>• Election campaign</li> <li>• Election day</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMB is able to access all parts of country</li> <li>• Candidates and parties are able to freely and safely access all parts of country</li> <li>• Voters are able to reach polling places</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Freedom of assembly</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election Campaign</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidates and parties are able to organise public meetings without hindrance</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Transparency</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election administration</li> <li>• Election dispute resolution</li> <li>• Election results</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions of EMB are transparent</li> <li>• Election dispute resolution is transparent</li> <li>• Campaign finance regulations provide for transparency</li> <li>• Details of tabulation and results are provided to stakeholders, with details broken down to as low level (polling station) as possible</li> <li>• Campaign finance regulations provide for transparency</li> <li>• Details of tabulation and results are provided to stakeholders, with details broken down to as low-level (polling station) as possible</li> <li>• Citizen observers (and international observers) are provided with full access to the process without impediment</li> </ul> |
| <b>Non-violent conduct</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election campaign</li> <li>• Voting</li> <li>• Post-election</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The process is free from violence during the pre-election, voting and post-election periods</li> </ul>   |

An EOM should consider many factors and questions in assessing an electoral process. This list is meant to be a set of indicators only. See Part 4 & 5 on Observing and Assessing the Pre-Election Period and Observing and Assessing the Election Period for further discussion of the types of issues and questions missions should consider.

## Assessment context

Ultimately, the assessment of an election will be objectively based on the extent to which it did or did not reflect the country/territory's international and regional obligations, commitments and standards, as well as its own legislation and regulations. However, some contextual considerations may mitigate or aggravate an assessment.

In circumstances where international obligations, commitments and standards have not been reached, or where national law or international best practice has not been followed, an EOM should consider whether there are mitigating or aggravating factors. For example, an EOM may be less critical in its overall assessment when problems are not deliberate and are addressed openly and honestly, while it should be highly critical of any election where there is dishonesty or undue political or executive interference.

Ultimately, while the conditions and history of a country/territory may help a mission to understand what is possible, it does not change what is acceptable. International and regional obligations, commitment and standards, along with best practice provide a benchmark to assess the credibility of an election. This in turn can assist a country/territory identify what went well and what needs to improve in order to strengthen the conduct of future elections and the wider democratic process.







PART 4:

## **OBSERVING AND ASSESSING THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD**

The EOM should seek to meet with a broad range of interlocutors to obtain information, discuss election-related issues and explain the role of the mission. This should include state and election officials, political parties, candidates, media outlets, civil society organisations, police forces and voters. When meeting with public officials, observers should clarify whether meetings are held in the interlocutor's official capacity or in a partisan political role. The EOM should also meet with academics, diplomats, organisations providing electoral assistance and other international observation missions.

At all times, observers should be courteous, considerate and sensitive to local customs. No personal opinions on election-related issues should be expressed at any time. Observers should ensure their questions are neutral in tone and pay particular attention to balance their meetings, engaging with political representatives from government and a broad range of opposition parties. For all meetings, they should:

- be aware of relevant background information
- prepare questions and discussion points in advance
- be considerate of interlocutors' time and not obstruct their work
- avoid leading questions and use open questions where possible
- ask for specific information (what, where, who, why, when, and how often)
- check the accuracy of information (by confirming their understanding with stakeholders, cross-checking with other interlocutors, and by direct observation)
- allow interlocutors the opportunity to bring up issues, ask questions and follow-up suggested recommendations

At initial meetings, observers should:

- introduce the mission, describing its background, duration, coverage and explain that the mission will assess the election in accordance with international standards for elections and adhere to the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation
- explain that the mission has been invited by the host authorities and is independent, impartial and will not interfere in the electoral process
- explain when the preliminary and final reports will be issued

**In assessing the pre-election period, the following areas should be covered:**

### **Legal framework**

The legislative framework includes election law(s) as well as a range of legislation and regulation on related matters, which can include laws on national electoral authorities, political parties, civil society organisations, citizenship, public meetings, voter registration, campaign finance, media, and elements of criminal and administrative legislation. It may also include constitutional provisions and laws relating to human rights and non-discrimination.

At the beginning of the mission, the election/legal expert should undertake a review of the legislative framework to assess its compliance with international obligations, commitments and standards and best practice. Shortcomings in the legislation should be outlined in the preliminary and final report, and addressed in recommendations in the final report.

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Election legislation should be drafted in an open and inclusive manner, in order to enjoy broad support among election stakeholders. According to good practice, significant changes should not be introduced shortly before an election, except under exceptional circumstances and with broad political support.

The impartial, fair and consistent implementation of the legislative framework is critically important. The EOM should assess the extent to which bodies responsible for implementation and enforcement (which can include election commissions, prosecutors and other government bodies, central and local government authorities, regulatory bodies, the courts and the police), comply with their obligations under the law and in line with international obligations, commitments and standards. A key factor in any election is the authorities' political will to implement the process in an impartial, transparent and accountable manner.

As part of its review of the legal framework, the EOM should assess whether there is public confidence in the electoral system and consider its merits or shortcomings insofar as it provides for the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms and political rights. Each electoral system has its own distinct characteristics which impact how complex the system is for voters to understand, how much it costs to implement, and how votes cast will be translated into electoral results. There is no particular model of an electoral system that can be described as an 'international standard'.

Procedures for the delineation of boundaries should also be assessed. The drawing of boundaries should be undertaken using a transparent and consistent procedure, established by law, and may include the use of criteria such as population size and geographical or administrative boundaries. Boundaries should be regularly reviewed to reflect demographic changes.

**Key questions to ask/issues to be aware of:**

- *Does the legal framework provide a sound basis for the conduct of genuine, competitive elections in accordance with international obligations, commitments and standards?*
- *Does the legal framework guarantee equal rights to men and women?*
- *Does the legal framework include any quotas or affirmative-action provisions to ensure women are elected? If so, what kinds of measures are provided?*
- *Does the legal framework provide any recognition of minorities?*
- *Are women, minorities and persons with disabilities provided with the opportunity in law and in practice to exercise their electoral and political rights without restrictions or discrimination?*
- *Does the legal framework enjoy broad confidence among electoral stakeholders?*
- *Are any aspects of the legislation vague or subject to varying interpretations?*
- *Is the legal framework implemented and complied with in a consistent and impartial manner?*

## **Election administration**

Elections are usually administered by an independent election management body (EMB), but can also be administered by executive bodies, such as the Ministry of Interior, the judiciary, temporary bodies staffed by civil servants, or a mixture of bodies. Whichever body is responsible, its work should be efficient, collegial, impartial, transparent and independent from the state authorities and other



political influences. It should be guided by the fair implementation of laws with no regard for political considerations, be able to undertake its work without political interference or intimidation and enjoy the confidence of election stakeholders.

There are various acceptable ways of forming EMBs. A non-partisan EMB consists of persons who are appointed on the basis of their professional experience. The independence of these members is strengthened when defined criteria are used to ensure that a balance of interests is represented. A partisan EMB consists of persons nominated by political parties or candidates. The integrity of partisan EMBs is greatly enhanced where its membership is representative of the political spectrum. A mixed independent EMB may include both partisan and non-partisan members. The EMB should use appropriate rules of procedure that regulate how it conducts business and makes decisions, be able to implement the election legislation and regulations without interference, intimidation or impediments to its duty.

An EMB is usually headed by a commission, responsible for decision-making and supervision of the entire process, supported by lower-level supervisory bodies that often reflect the different levels of local government. Various government ministries and regional and local officials may be required to carry out administrative and logistical operations. Staff should be protected against arbitrary or politically motivated removal. All personnel should be provided with instructions and/or training on their role and responsibilities, including their duty to act in a fair and impartial manner.

To ensure that its decisions are seen to be free from partisan interests, the EMB should act in a transparent and accountable manner and be provided, in a timely manner, with funds from the state or local budget sufficient to meet its responsibilities. Public confidence is enhanced if stakeholders are made fully aware of its work, and decisions and minutes of meetings are published promptly. Transparency can be achieved through consultation with election stakeholders, regular briefings of the media, and by holding open sessions which party or candidate representatives, observers and members of the media may attend.

Ballot papers should be designed as simply as possible so that they are easy for voters to understand and fill out and be available in relevant languages. Along with other sensitive election materials, they should be properly supervised and secured at all times. It is good practice to grant interested parties the right to observe the printing, distribution and storage of ballot papers to bolster confidence in the process.

New voting technologies, including electronic voting (also known as e-voting), are becoming increasingly common, bringing both benefits and challenges. While they can enhance voter participation and ensure faster counting and tabulation, which is less prone to human error, many of the transparency protections that come with paper ballots are absent in e-voting, which may impact negatively on public confidence in the process. Public confidence is enhanced where there has been an inclusive decision-making process to adopt the technology and transparency by the authorities in the selection, certification and testing of the equipment used.

Sufficient voter information and education is needed to ensure that participants

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in the electoral process are fully informed of their rights and responsibilities as voters. While political parties and civil society organisations may contribute to these efforts, it is ultimately the responsibility of the authorities, including the election administration, to ensure that voters receive clear, objective, impartial and timely information. It is good practice to provide voter education in major minority languages in addition to the language of the majority.

The EOM should observe the work of all levels of the election administration, attending meetings where possible. It should assess whether a sufficient number of election officials have been appointed as well as whether they have received appropriate training and are familiar with the tasks to be carried out on election day. The mission should also assess the extent and effectiveness of voter information and education.

**Key questions to ask/issues to be aware of:**

- *Is there public confidence in the work of the EMB?*
- *Is the EMB able to work freely, without interference or intimidation?*
- *Is the EMB acting independently (functioning in a fair and impartial manner)?*
- *Is the EMB adhering to the law, including complying with legal deadlines?*
- *Is the EMB acting in a transparent and inclusive manner?*
- *Is the EMB providing consistent and adequate guidance to lower-level officials?*
- *If in use, is there broad confidence of the public and electoral stakeholders in new voting technologies, including e-voting? Does the e-voting system provide an auditable paper trail to verify the voting results?*
- *What are the proportions of men and women serving on electoral bodies at all levels?*
- *To what degree do women hold and exercise leadership positions in election administration bodies?*
- *Is the EMB making efforts to employ people from minority groups?*
- *Is the EMB communicating effectively with election stakeholders and the wider public?*
- *Is the EMB consulting appropriately with political parties, candidates, civil society organisations, and other election stakeholders?*
- *Is the EMB considering and addressing the needs of people with disabilities?*
- *Is voter education being conducted appropriately, effectively and impartially, including, as required, for minorities and persons with disabilities?*

## **Voter registration**

The right to vote is a fundamental human right that should be provided without discrimination and with only reasonable exclusions, restrictions or disqualifications. For example, those relating to age, residency and citizenship. Countries/territories have adopted a variety of means for registering voters. Active registration (sometimes called voter-initiated registration) requires voters to initiate or apply for inclusion on the voter register. Passive registration (sometimes called state-initiated registration) requires state authorities to initiate the compilation of the voter register using residency or citizenship registers, or some other form of record. Either type of system is acceptable if it produces a comprehensive, transparent, inclusive and accurate voter register.

A voter register may be produced centrally or by using regional sources of

information that are then merged to produce a single national register. Registered voters may be provided with voter cards as proof of their registration. There may be legal provisions that allow non-registered eligible voters to be included on special supplementary voter lists on election day.

There should be clear legal requirements governing qualification and disqualification with respect to citizenship, age and residence. This should also include timelines for registration for specific elections, the method of registration and the format of the voter register. The law should also clearly set forth the accepted means of identification (evidence of eligibility) and the complaints and appeals procedures when a voter is not on the voter register. It is common that the legal framework for voter registration also regulates the temporary absence of voters from their place of residence.

Registration procedures and facilities should be as simple as possible, free of charge, and should be readily accessible to voters. The authorities should ensure that a preliminary voter register is made available for public inspection well in advance of election day. This is to ensure any omissions, inaccuracies or errors can be corrected via effective administration or judicial procedures. Political parties should have an opportunity to access the full voter register. All complaints relating to voter registration should be resolved within a reasonable timeframe prior to election day.

The voter register requires constant updating to remain as accurate as possible. This can take place on an ongoing basis, at fixed regular periods, or only when an election is called. Systems should be in place to ensure that deceased persons are removed from the register and those who have reached voting age are added. Ideally, there should be provisions for citizens abroad to register and to vote. If voters receive special voter cards to identify themselves at polling stations on election day, there must be adequate security to avoid duplication of the cards.

New technologies are increasingly used to enable voter registration data to be kept in a central electronic database that allows for the easy exchange of information on voters between localities and the checking of multiple entries and other anomalies. This can increase transparency as the electronic registers may be more easily shared with stakeholders, such as political parties and civil society organisations, and voters can check their data online. At the same time, new technologies bring new challenges such as training for election officials and the need to ensure the technology chosen is appropriate, cost-effective and sustainable.

Biometric voter registers (BVR) include personal characteristics of the voter, such as photo, fingerprint or retina scan, which are recorded during registration and used to identify the voter at the polling station. BVR can serve to prevent multiple registrations and act as an effective safeguard against voter impersonation. In so doing it can enhance the quality of the voter register and increase public confidence in the process. At the same time, BVR brings challenges, and countries/territories must be careful to select technology that is both appropriate and sustainable.

The EOM should carefully assess the inclusiveness of the voter registration process. In particular, it should assess whether unreasonable restrictions were placed on voter registration. Unreasonable restrictions include those based on

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race, sex, religion, ethnic origin, (past) political affiliations, language, literacy, ownership of property or ability to pay a registration fee.

**Key questions to ask/issues to be aware of:**

- *Are there suitable opportunities for the registration of all voters?*
- *Is there public confidence in the accuracy and reliability of the voter register?*
- *Are women and men registered in numbers proportional to their share of the population? If not, why not?*
- *Are minorities registered in numbers proportional to their share of the population? If not, why not?*
- *Are there systemic shortcomings or obstacles in the voter registration process that are disadvantageous to women, minorities or persons with disabilities?*
- *Are all legal exclusions and/or restrictions on the right to suffrage reasonable?*
- *Are there suitable measures to include newly-eligible voters, prevent multiple entries, and remove the names of ineligible or deceased persons?*
- *Are there widespread inaccuracies and/or duplications in the register?*
- *Is there verifiable evidence that eligible voters are not registered, or that ineligible voters are registered? If so, are these isolated instances or do they constitute a pattern?*
- *Is the preliminary voter register/list available for public inspection?*
- *Are effective opportunities available for inaccuracies and omissions to be corrected?*
- *Does the voter registration process cater for the needs of people with disabilities?*
- *Has there been adequate training of election officials and testing of any new technology systems prior to election day?*
- *Is the EMB in a position to exercise proper control over the functioning of new technology systems, and is there sufficient accountability?*

## Registration of political parties and candidates

Freedom of association is a prerequisite for the full enjoyment of the right to take part in government, including the formation or joining political parties. However, the state has an obligation to regulate political parties to the degree necessary to ensure effective, representative and fair governance. Most countries have a specific legal framework for the registration and regulation of political parties or other political movements that establishes procedural requirements.

The regulation of political parties should be undertaken by bodies that enjoy guaranteed impartiality both in law and in practice. Regulations may include requirements for internal democracy and financing as well as a unique name and symbol for each political party. Restrictions on the right to form or join a political party should be reasonable. Political parties should have recourse in law to be heard by an independent tribunal for all decisions affecting their fundamental rights of association, expression and assembly.

The right to stand for office is a fundamental civil and political right and is an essential element of democratic elections. All persons, political parties or political groups who wish to stand for election should be free to do so, on equal terms, without discrimination. Individuals should be able to stand as independent candidates as well as nominees of a political party.

There should be no restrictions on the registration of candidates or parties for

reasons such as race, gender, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, association with a minority or ethnic group, property, birth or other personal status. However, good practices include special mechanisms designed to ensure more equitable representation of women or minority groups.

The election administration is usually responsible for registering candidates.

***...We recognise the inalienable right of individuals to participate in democratic processes, in particular through free and fair elections in shaping the society in which they live. Governments, political parties and civil society are responsible for upholding and promoting democratic culture and practices and are accountable to the public in this regard. Parliaments and representative local governments and other forms of local governance are essential elements in the exercise of democratic governance...***

Section 1 of the The Commonwealth Charter, 2013

Procedures should be clearly established and applied consistently in a manner that does not restrict the range of political options for voters. Potentially discriminatory measures, such as a requirement to have excessive numbers of supporting signatures, or unreasonably large financial deposits should be avoided. Adequate time should be provided between the opening and closing of nominations to allow candidates to prepare and submit their registration papers.

The disqualification of a candidate should be made only on the most serious grounds. Candidates should have an opportunity to rectify technical errors in their nominations and to challenge their disqualification. All complaints relating to candidate registration should be resolved within a reasonable timeframe before election day so that successful candidates have sufficient opportunity to campaign. Following their registration, candidates should not be subject to interference, including any pressure, coercion or intimidation, or attempts to force their withdrawal.

**Key questions to ask/issues to be aware of:**

- *Is the right to form or join a political party guaranteed in law?*
- *Are all political groups equally able to form political parties, and are all citizens equally able to join the political party of their choice?*
- *Is there any unreasonable official interference in the operation of political parties?*
- *Are any unreasonable restrictions placed on the right to associate or run for office?*
- *Is there a provision for independent candidates to run for office? If so, what percentage of independent candidates are women?*
- *Is there any selective and unfair implementation of the law with respect to the registration of political parties or candidates?*
- *Do any aspects of candidate registration directly or indirectly affect the ability of women candidates or candidates from minority groups to stand?*
- *For each party, what is the gender breakdown of their candidates?*
- *Of the women on each party candidate list, how many are in winnable positions?*
- *Is there a genuine choice offering alternative political views to voters?*

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## Campaign

Freedoms of expression, assembly, association and movement are prerequisites for a democratic election process. For there to be an open and fairly contested campaign, all candidates, political parties, and their supporters must be able to promote their policies, hold meetings and travel around the country. All contestants should have an equal period of time in which to campaign.

There should be equal opportunities for holding public rallies, producing and using electoral materials, and conducting other campaign activities. This is to guarantee that candidates, political parties and their supporters are able to present freely their views and qualifications for office. No arbitrary or unreasonable restrictions should be placed on campaign activities, meetings or rallies. Those wishing to assemble should enjoy this right equally and should only be required to notify the authorities. The EOM should observe rallies by various political parties and candidates, across the political spectrum. They should also and hold meetings with candidates and party representatives to listen to their views about the conduct of the campaign and the wider electoral process.

Violence or the threat of violence, intimidation, or incitement of such acts through hate speech and aggressive political rhetoric are incompatible with democratic elections. Security forces have a duty to behave in a neutral manner, refrain from intimidation and protect citizens from election-related violence, intimidation and coercion. Candidates and their supporters should be free from harassment, including threats of job dismissals, especially for public employees. The EOM should record information on any reports of election-related violence and intimidation and seek to ensure that the information it receives is accurate and credible.

To promote transparency and accountability of campaign finance, candidates and political parties should be obliged to disclose funding sources and provide reports and accounts of their campaign expenditure. Where state funds are provided for campaign purposes, they should be disbursed on a fair, equitable and timely basis. Reasonable restrictions on fundraising can include limits on funding from foreign or anonymous sources. Limits on campaign spending may be necessary to prevent a disproportionate or one-sided campaign, but should not be so strict as to prevent effective campaigning. An EOM should also consider the broader political finance context, as it directly affects the ability of parties and candidates to compete.

It is the responsibility of the government to ensure that public and administrative resources, both material and human, are not used in support of any particular candidates or parties. For example, government office space, vehicles and telecommunications equipment should not be used for partisan purposes unless access is specifically regulated, provided in the form of in-kind state subsidies and based on fair criteria. If public buildings or other public facilities are available for use as campaign offices or campaign meetings, they should be available to all candidates or parties on the same basis.

Incumbents should not seek to use the benefits of their elected office as part of an election campaign. Public officials and civil servants should participate in campaign activities only in a personal capacity during their free time away from working hours, and should not wear a uniform of their place of employment.



Public employees should not be required to attend campaign events, finance individual candidates or political parties, or be coerced to vote for a particular party or candidate.

Vote-buying involves the provision of money or other benefits to voters to support a particular party or candidate, or to officials as an incentive to manipulate election results. Such practices are serious and can undermine the credibility of the election process. At the same time, vote-buying is difficult to monitor as it generally does not take place in plain view. Observers should track and follow up on allegations of vote-buying, for instance by checking whether authorities have investigated such reports or complaints.

**Key questions to ask/issues to be aware of:**

- *Are freedoms of expression, assembly, association and movement provided for by law without discrimination? Are they respected in practice? Are any restrictions on these rights 'necessary in a democratic society'?*
- *Are campaign regulations implemented and enforced in a consistent, impartial and effective manner?*
- *Are all candidates and political parties able to present their views to the electorate in an open and fairly contested campaign?*
- *To what extent do party and candidate platforms address issues of particular interest to women, minorities and persons with disabilities?*
- *Does the legal framework effectively regulate campaign finance, requiring transparent disclosure of income and expenditure?*
- *Are the responsibilities of the body in charge of enforcement of campaign finance regulations clearly stated in the law and does this body have effective means of control and enforcement?*
- *Are regulations on campaign financing, including limits on spending, being implemented and enforced in a consistent, impartial and effective manner?*
- *Is the use of state/public resources permitted? Are state resources being used to the advantage of one or more political contestants?*
- *Are there allegations of vote-buying? If so, what is the extent of them and do they appear to be credible?*
- *Are there verifiable instances of violence, intimidation or harassment, or incitement of such acts? Are such incidents promptly, consistently and effectively addressed?*
- *Are law enforcement agencies acting in an impartial, restrained, professional and appropriate manner?*
- *Have contestants agreed to abide by a code of conduct for campaigning and, if so, is the code being adhered to?*
- *What is the impact of the use of online media on the campaign environment?*
- *Are there direct or indirect restrictions on the ability of women candidates and their supporters to campaign?*
- *Are there direct or indirect restrictions on the ability of national minority candidates and their supporters to campaign?*

## **Media**

During an election period, the media is likely to be the main platform for debate among contestants and the central source of news and analysis on party and candidate manifestos. It is also likely to be the main platform for a range of information about the election process itself, including preparations, voting, results and voter education. It is essential that candidates and political parties



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have the right to communicate their political opinions and manifestos in the media. Radio, television and newspapers should provide a sufficient level of coverage that is fair, balanced and impartial, so that voters receive a diverse range of information to enable them to make an informed choice. The authorities should ensure that the media have the right to gather and impart information freely, without undue interference, intimidation or obstruction of media outlets or journalists. Censorship should be prohibited and the editorial independence of media outlets should be respected.

State-owned and publicly funded media have a special responsibility to be balanced and impartial during an election campaign period and should provide equitable access to candidates and parties as part of their responsibilities to the public. It is good practice for state and public media, at least, to provide free airtime or print space to the candidates or parties. In the case of party political broadcasts, these should be broadcast without editorial interference, with time allocated on a non-discriminatory basis. While incumbents may receive media coverage related to their official duties, this should not be misused as a means to give them an unfair advantage, and campaign events should not be confused with issues of state.

Although privately owned broadcasters tend to have fewer obligations placed on them, journalistic professionalism suggests that they should remain impartial and balanced in their news coverage. In the case of newspapers, there is a common pattern for newspaper titles to support a political party in their editorial lines. However, there should be a clear separation between news stories and editorials that distinguishes between fact and opinion. On the other hand, private electronic media are often subject to a higher degree of control by public authorities, as they benefit from the allocation of limited public resources (airwaves and frequencies).

The role of the internet during an election process is becoming an increasingly relevant area of assessment for international observer missions, in particular in relation to online media and the use of web platforms by election stakeholders. It allows political parties, candidates, election authorities and civil society groups to engage more directly with citizens than traditional media. Social networking sites provide voters with a wide range of potential opinion-makers and are increasingly being used to initiate and organise political action.

A media supervisory authority, in some cases the EMB, may be responsible for oversight of media conduct during the campaign period. It should act in an impartial, independent, transparent and consistent manner and have responsibility for investigating alleged violations. It may also accept complaints about media behaviour during elections, while, in other cases, these complaints are made to the same bodies as other election-related complaints. Sanctions imposed should be reasonable and proportional, avoiding measures that could have a chilling effect on the media, lead to self-censorship among journalists, or act to stifle media freedom in any other way.

An EOM monitors both state/public, private media and social media to assess their impact on the campaign and whether, through all sources, the electorate receives sufficient, balanced and impartial information to make an informed decision. Particular attention is given to newscasts and political talk shows broadcast in prime time. An EOM also assesses whether laws permit freedom of the media during the campaign, how well this freedom is upheld, whether

the media regulation bodies are fulfilling their responsibilities, and whether complaints are handled in a fair and efficient manner and any consequent sanctions implemented. Given the increasing use and importance of social media, an EOM should also consider its use, in particular to see whether it is being used for hate speech or incitement.

**Key questions to ask/issues to be aware of:**

- *Is there a pluralistic and independent media environment, which provides access to a broad range of political opinion?*
- *Does the legal framework guarantee the freedom of the media? If so, is this freedom respected in practice? Are there any restrictions on Internet freedom?*
- *Is the media able to work freely and operate without prior censorship (including self-censorship), intimidation, obstruction or interference?*
- *Is there any intimidation, harassment or violence against journalists?*
- *Is there any coverage that may be regarded as hate speech?*
- *Do all candidates and political parties receive fair, balanced and impartial coverage on the state/public media?*
- *Do all candidates and political parties have equitable access to airtime or print space in the state/public media?*
- *Do women candidates receive a comparable quantity and quality of coverage to that of men?*
- *Are issues of special interest to women, minority groups and persons with disabilities covered by the media? Are there media operating in minority languages?*
- *Are there any complaints of unfair coverage or interference in free airtime/print space in the state-owned or publicly funded media?*
- *Do the private media provide the public with sufficient coverage of the election campaign and election-related issues? Is the coverage impartial and balanced?*
- *Does the media supervisory body (if in existence) act independently and function in an impartial, transparent, effective and professional manner?*

## **Complaints and appeals**

Complaints and appeals are an important component of an election process and may arise in relation to any aspect of the process. All citizens have a right to an effective remedy, where their political rights have been infringed or denied. Election stakeholders, including citizens, should be made aware of their right to lodge complaints and appeals and readily provided with opportunities to submit complaints and follow the process of adjudication.

Procedures and deadlines should be clearly set out in the election law. Timeframes should provide a suitable balance between the time pressures of an election process, and ensuring that there is sufficient time to allow a complaint/appeal to be lodged and heard fairly. There should also be sufficient time to allow for any remedy to be meaningful. This is particularly important for complaints that relate to voter or candidate registration, as remedies should be enforceable before election day.

The right to appeal to election bodies and courts should be established to enable a clear, understandable, single and hierarchical complaint process that defines the roles of each level of election commission and each level of the courts. Disputes

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may be initially handled by the election administration and appeals lodged before a court. Alternatively, complaints may be dealt with by the EMB only, or by the judiciary only. If complainants are required to appeal first to election bodies, the law should always grant the right to appeal to a court of law at a higher instance, and this court should be able to examine the substance of the case.

The adjudication of complaints should be undertaken in a transparent, timely and impartial manner. Decisions should be made public, be based only on the available evidence and without political consideration. Observers should pay careful attention to the legal reasoning motivating decisions and to the independence and impartiality of courts. The conduct of complaints and appeals processes is a useful indicator of the overall rule of law in the country/territory, and the level of public confidence in the integrity of the judiciary.

The Election/Legal Analyst should keep track of complaints submitted and how they are resolved. An EOM may take steps to try to verify the basis of complaints and follow how effectively they are being addressed. Missions should always encourage complainants to use the prescribed procedures for complaints and make clear that it cannot adjudicate.

Only ongoing complaints that may impact on the overall outcome of the election would justify CPA UK extending the deployment of the Election/Legal Analyst to follow the remaining process.

***“I wish to express my profound gratitude to the Election Observer Mission for supporting my nomination to the Mission.***

***The experience was a rewarding one in that so many similarities exist between the TCI and the BVI electoral process that the knowledge gained was shared with the Supervisor of Election in TCI.***

***The opportunity was also afforded me to be part of a great team that had the expertise to carry out a vigorous exercise.***

***I was impressed by the manner in which the people of BVI displayed excellent tolerance whether they were waiting to cast their vote or during the counting.***

***If asked to participate in any future EOM, I will accept willingly.”***

Hon. Ruth Blackman MP, Turks & Caicos Islands,  
Observer to the CPA BIMR Virgin Islands (UK) EOM, 2015

### **Key questions to ask/issues to be aware of:**

- *Does the law provide citizens with the right to an effective remedy in cases where their political rights have been infringed?*
- *Are complaints procedures transparent, clear and unambiguous?*
- *Are complaints addressed in an effective and timely manner?*
- *Are remedies provided within a realistic timeframe?*
- *Is there a right of appeal to a court? Are court decisions enforced?*
- *Are decisions on complaints or appeals taken impartially?*
- *Is there public confidence in the complaints and appeals process?*









## PART 5:

# OBSERVING AND ASSESSING THE ELECTION PERIOD

The main purpose of deploying observers over the election period is to gather information so that the mission can make an informed and impartial assessment. This will include the conduct of voting, counting and tabulation, and be based on first-hand observations and verifiable information. In advance of election day, observers will meet with election stakeholders to gather information on the conduct of the wider election process. The deployment of observers, in tandem with a targeted and managed media strategy, will help to provide visibility for the mission, confidence to the population and may also help to decrease tensions where they exist.

### **Deployment and orientation**

By the time observers arrive in the country or territory, the EOM will have established a base in the capital and arranged key meetings. In advance of their arrival, observers will receive background material on the mission and the country/territory.

The mission will develop a deployment plan, which should be designed to ensure that observers are in a position to offer an informed and balanced assessment of the electoral process. Observers will operate in two-person teams, each provided with a specific Area of Responsibility (AoR) to cover. Depending on the size and geography of the country/territory, teams may stay in their AoR or may be able to access it from the capital on a daily basis. Each team will have access to a vehicle to support their work. Teams are likely to be deployed to a cross-section of geographic areas, observing in a mix of urban and rural areas. They should take account of any reported hot spots while maintaining a balanced approach to their coverage and not focus unduly on areas where problems are anticipated.

Teams deployed to a regional base should, ensure that their accommodation is suitable in terms of location, communications and security. Prime considerations for this include:

- Does the location of the hotel provide convenient and safe access to the main offices of the election administration in the area?
- Does the hotel provide good security in the event of deterioration in the political/security environment?
- Is there secure parking for the team's vehicle?
- Are communications adequate?

Teams should also get a feel for the area by speaking with the driver (when applicable) and others, such as people at the hotel etc, to help them plan out a productive and secure route for election day. They should also think carefully about communications, ensuring good mobile phone coverage, as far as possible, and taking note of areas where this is not the case. This is important for reporting and security.

### **Security**

CPA UK takes security very seriously and will consult with officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) prior to deployment of the mission. Mission members should be briefed on security issues upon arrival. Most importantly they should not take any unnecessary or undue risks. Each mission member's personal safety overrides all other considerations. Any major security concerns should be identified and taken into account when the deployment plan is drawn



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up. Observers should not be deployed to an area where there is deemed to be a credible threat.

The main security and safety threats are likely to be a car accident or economic-based crime. Observers must take care on the roads at all times. The route for their observation on election day should be chosen carefully and avoiding long drives in the dark on remote or poor roads. In terms of economic-based crime, observers should always be aware of their surroundings, never flaunt expensive items, such as cameras, jewellery, watches, and avoid being in isolated areas at night.

Observers should be particularly conscious of security at campaign rallies, ensuring that their car is parked in a convenient location, in a manner that enables a 'quick getaway' (i.e. not hemmed in or parked in a way that requires a lengthy manoeuvre to get out). When walking around during a rally, observers should not go too far into the heart of the crowd, but rather place themselves towards the edge of the crowd, providing a good perspective as well as the opportunity to leave unobtrusively and quickly if required.

If election-related violence breaks out it is unlikely that observers will be a direct target, but could be in the wrong place at the wrong time. They should therefore remain in close contact with other mission members and local sources (such as the EMB, civil society organisations and police) to maintain intelligence about the local environment. If observers come across a hostile, or potentially hostile, situation they should remove themselves from the location. Observers are present to observe an election process, not civil unrest and can always speak with people after an incident has taken place to find out what occurred.

Observers should remember that their decisions affect not only themselves but also their team colleague and driver, so should not act rashly or casually in a difficult security situation. Observer visibility through wearing t-shirts, etc. is usually positive but should be removed if they become a liability (such as if the colour is connected to a particular party).

If observers are in any doubt about security and safety concerns, they should return to their base, contact mission members and discuss the best next steps. Observers should always ensure their mobile phones are charged (communications are their greatest asset for security) and they have all key contacts (mission members, emergency services) saved or easily available.

## Meetings

Prior to the election day period, the mission will conduct meetings with a wide range of election stakeholders in the capital (key points of enquiry for which are covered in part four of this handbook). These meetings are essential in building up a comprehensive understanding of the context in which the election is being held and the key issues that need to be considered. The feedback gained during this period can help identify issues that observers should pay particular attention to during deployment.

Observers may also have time for further meetings prior to election day once they arrive in their AoR, particularly with the election administration, political parties and candidates, media outlets and civil society representatives. These will

help them understand the regional/local dynamic and increase the visibility of the mission and overall impact it makes. In all meetings, observers should ask open, non-judgemental questions to gather information. They should not offer comment on the conduct of the electoral process or give advice or instructions on what should be done.

Meeting with the EMB in the AoR should be a priority. It is an opportunity to introduce the mission, share contact details, request a list of polling stations, enquire about plans for tabulation and the transmission of results, and enquire about security concerns. Observers should also ask the EMB about their state of preparedness as well as their views on the conduct of the process so far (for instance on voter registration, the campaign and complaints and appeals).

### **Coordination with other observers**

*“In many people’s minds, election observation is about sending a group of observers to polling stations on Election Day, and although that is a part of it, there is much more involved. It includes a core team of experts that analyse the electoral laws and the constitution as well as the voter registration process, voter education, campaign rules and behavior. Finally, observers also stay on after the elections to report on the final tabulation and publication of results, and any electoral disputes and their resolution.*”

*I found being a part of an Election Observer Mission an excellent opportunity not only to bring my own election experience to the table, but also in knowing that our very presence helps ensure that human rights and democratic values are respected and further inspires confidence in the quality and legitimacy of the electoral processes in the country.”*

Shivonne White, Electoral Official, Montserrat, CPA BIMR Election Observer, Anguilla, 2014

If observers find they are in a location where other international observers are also present it is good practice to meet, share information, share contacts (very useful for security) and discuss deployment plans in order to try to avoid overlap in terms of polling stations covered. It is also good to meet with citizen observers to hear their thoughts on the conduct of the electoral process in the local area, offer encouragement to them and ask whether they have encountered any problems.

### **Approach to observation**

Observers should decide upon a suitable place to observe the opening of a polling station, their prospective route for the day (prospective because they should remain flexible and responsive) and a potential polling station to observe the close and the count (if ballots are counted in the polling station). Based on information received from the EMB, observers should also make plans to observe the tabulation of results in their AoR. If

their driver is registered to vote and from their AoR, observers should find an opportunity for him/her to be able to do so at some point.

Observers should use the report forms prepared by the mission to record their assessment of voting, counting and tabulation. Throughout their observations, they should keep in mind that the mission seeks to identify key trends and major incidents. If critical issues arise, observers should follow up with the EMB in their AoR and can also contact the Election/Legal and Political/Campaign Analysts to discuss any concerns.

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## Conduct inside polling stations

Observers should remain in each polling station visited for at least 30 minutes to gain an insight into the process. During each visit, they should:

- Have their accreditation ready as proof of eligibility to be present
- Identify the Presiding Officer (Head of the Polling Station) and introduce themselves and the mission
- Explain the purpose of their visit, indicate that they will remain for a time to observe the process and explain that they have a few questions to ask
- Pick the best moment to go through their questions to avoid disrupting the process. Phrase questions in an open, respectful, manner
- Find a position that has a good view of the process and move around the polling station to get different viewpoints
- Politely and discreetly seek an explanation for problems observed, without being judgemental
- Discreetly speak with party agents and citizen observers to gain their perspectives
- Keep in mind the code of conduct requirements not interfere or give instructions and not to offer comments on the process
- Refrain from speaking with voters inside a polling station or in the queue waiting to vote, as this could be misconstrued as an attempt to influence them
- Refrain from signing any official election documents or touching any sensitive election material, such as ballot papers

If observers are denied entry to a polling station, they should not contest this but rather inform the mission HQ and EMB in their AoR. This may well lead to a solution, but if it does not, the team should note the refusal and move on to another polling station.

## Key assessment areas

Observation of voting, counting and tabulation will provide substantive input into the mission's assessment of the extent to which the following key benchmarks were met:

- Universal suffrage
- Right to vote
- Women's participation
- Secret vote
- Free expression of the will of electors
- Freedom of movement
- Transparency
- Non-violence

The following points can be used to help guide the assessment as to whether key benchmarks were met or not:

### General environment

**Key Points:** The general environment around the country/territory and around polling stations needs to be conducive to the free expression of the will of the electors

- If there is a requirement for a period of campaign silence, is it respected?

- Are there instances of violence and/or intimidation?
- Are groups of party supporters present in a manner that may be intimidatory?
- Is the presence of police/security helpful or a concern?
- Are the conditions conducive to voters participating without fear or inducement?
- Have appropriate arrangements been made for people with disabilities?

### **Opening**

**Key Points:** Polling stations need to be open on time, with materials and staff present. Procedures need to be transparent to prove integrity of the process

*Observers should arrive at a polling station 30 minutes in advance of opening time.*

- Is the polling station ready to open on time, with officials and materials present?
- Is the polling station accessible to people with disabilities?
- If there is a queue, is it orderly and well managed?
- Is the process transparent and accountable, with the ballot box shown to be empty prior to the commencement of voting?
- Is the ballot box properly secured/sealed according to regulations?

### **Voting**

**Key Points:** The right to vote and secrecy of the vote need to be guaranteed, while safeguarding the integrity of the process through checks on voter identity.

- Is the queue well managed at each polling station?
- Is the polling station accessible to people with disabilities? Are procedures in place for assisted voting for persons with disabilities?
- Are appropriate voting materials provided for people with disabilities?
- Is the identity of voters checked?
- Is the voter register proving reliable, enabling registered persons to vote?
- Are ballots being handled in the correct manner?
- Are voters able to vote in secret?
- Are there any examples of group or proxy voting?
- Is the ballot box secure?
- If ink is required, is it being applied?
- Are any unauthorised persons involved in the process?
- Are citizen observers and party agents able to adequately follow proceedings? Do they appear to have confidence in the voting process?
- Are women, youth and minorities well represented as voters?
- Are there provisions for absentee voting, or for people confined to institutions (hospitals, retirement homes) to vote? If yes, are proper safeguards in place?
- Is there any tension or violence?
- Are women well represented as polling officials? Is the chair a woman?

### **Counting and polling station results**

Counting is usually undertaken in polling stations. If multiple ballot boxes are counted in counting centres, the same key principles apply.

**Key Points:** The count needs to be transparent, fair and honest.

- At the close of voting, were those legitimately waiting to vote able to do so?
- Is the counting of ballots done transparently by polling station officials?



- Are decisions on the invalidity of ballot papers reasonable, fair and consistent?
- Are there any substantive complaints about the counting process?
- Are citizen observers and party agents able to adequately follow proceedings? Do they appear to have confidence in the counting process?
- Is a copy of the polling station results provided to candidate/party agents and publicly posted at the polling station?
- Is the result of the polling station generally accepted by those present?
- Is paperwork on the counting process properly completed?
- Are polling materials secured and delivered to the next level of the election administration without delay or interference?
- If transmission of results is done by phone, is it done promptly and without a problem?

### **Tabulation and higher-level results**

**Key Points:** Tabulation and final results need to be transparent, accountable and timely.

*If possible, observers should follow the transport/transfer of election materials to the tabulation centre.*

- Is the delivery of polling materials and results managed in an effective manner, ensuring integrity of the process?
- Are results from different polling stations added together in a transparent manner?
- Are citizen observers and party agents able to adequately follow proceedings? Do they appear to have confidence in the tabulation process?
- Are there any substantive complaints about the tabulation process?
- Are the results announced according to the stated timelines?

The tabulation process can be drawn out and observers need to plan their coverage of the process carefully, taking account of what is feasible. Wherever possible they should seek to gain a thorough understanding of the tabulation process, including the inputting of data, handling of complaints and final determination of results.

## **Reporting on voting, counting and tabulation**

Missions need to build up a picture of the conduct of voting, counting and tabulation on a rolling basis. Observers should provide feedback at the beginning of the day on the opening of polling stations so the mission can assess whether voting is adequately underway. They should then provide regular feedback throughout the day by telephone. The Head of Mission should be made aware of significant incidents and trends in case s/he is questioned by the media and/or needs to follow-up with the Head of the EMB.

Each observer team will be provided with a number of report forms, and may also be provided with a reporting guide. This will help guide them through the voting, counting and tabulation processes and provide a coherent and consistent reporting tool. One report form should be completed for every polling station visited, which should reflect the joint and agreed findings of the team. Observer teams should retain their reports and/or notes from each polling station visited. These will be used for the debrief (by telephone at the end of the day or back in the capital, depending on logistical arrangements), which is covered below.

In preparing their reports, observers should consider the difference between technical detail and more critical findings and make sure they substantiate observations, particularly those that are critical. Observers should judge the spirit of an action as well as the frequency of a problem. For instance, if one voter is unable to find themselves on a voter list this is unfortunate for the voter, but not a major shortcoming from the mission perspective. Likewise, if polling officials are not following the prescribed procedures 100%, but are trying their best and getting the job done effectively, this should be taken into consideration.



### **Post-election period and environment**

If there is sufficient time after observers have finished following voting, counting and tabulation processes, they should hold further meetings, or telephone calls, with election stakeholders they have been in contact with in their AoR. Such meetings provide an opportunity to discuss issues that arose during the observation.

Observers should also reflect on the post-election environment, assessing the degree to which the process and results have been accepted locally. Meetings

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with election stakeholders can also be helpful in this regard. Observers should be aware of any post-election tensions and not take risks if the environment deteriorates or becomes hostile.

## Debrief

Upon returning to the capital, observers will gather to discuss their findings. In many respects this is a confirmation process as extensive discussion and feedback will have taken place throughout the deployment period, but it provides an important opportunity to go through issues that have arisen to ensure that nothing has been missed or misunderstood. Report forms can be used as a tool to identify where problems arose and to provide relevant details. While the experience of teams deployed to different areas may vary quite considerably, the aim of the debriefing should be to reach consensus on key findings and conclusions.







PART 6:

## **MISSION REPORTING AND FOLLOW-UP**

CPA UK EOMs will issue a series of public reports (see below), and through the Head of Mission, will engage regularly with media. This forms part of a communications strategy which is designed to help the mission ensure it makes substantive, credible and timely comments on the electoral process. It will also be a effective mechanism in raising the mission's profile along with public and stakeholder confidence in the mission.

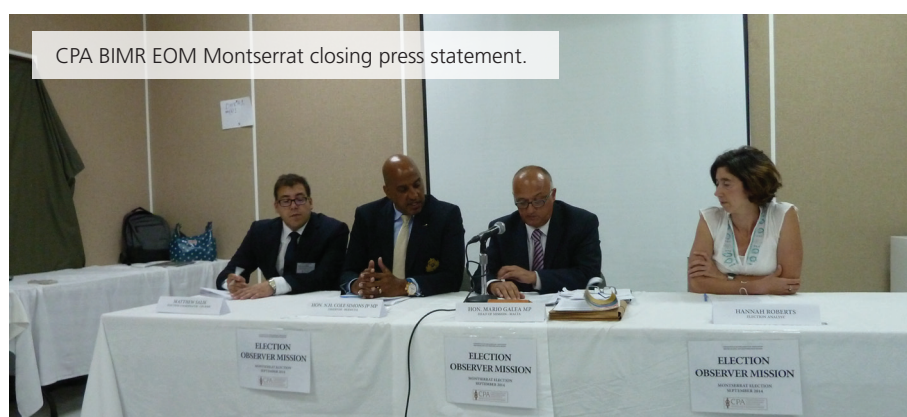
## Media and communications

### CPA UK Communications Strategy

CPA UK provides each mission with a communications strategy, outlining the approach to communications and the media that should be followed. The strategy establishes that the Head of Mission is the official spokesperson. It also provides key background information on the status and role of the mission which can be useful in answering media questions. CPA UK will also produce a toolkit for handling the media, including suggested lines-to-take for questions relating to the mandate, role and conduct of a mission.

In the planning stages of the mission, CPA UK will engage with the invitation issuing authority press and media relations teams to give notice of scheduled press conferences and to identify the best media outlets to ensure maximum coverage of the mission's activities.

CPA UK will also generate a dedicated email account for mission members to utilise and access. This email address and designated telephone numbers will be communicated to the media, voters and other stakeholders so as to ensure they can communicate directly with the mission in a secure and confidential way.



### Role of the Head of Mission

The Head of Mission is mandated to speak on behalf of the mission. Their most important role as spokesperson will involve taking the lead at the opening press conference to present the mission's arrival statement and presenting the preliminary report at the post-election press conference. The Head of Mission will also conduct interviews with media outlets, which provide opportunities to explain the mandate and purpose of the mission and ensure openness and transparency.

Public comments by EOM on the electoral process are usually confined to the closing press conference, where the preliminary report is released. However the Head of Mission may also decide to comment publicly on the conduct of the election during pre-election interviews. This could be the case, for example, if there is a prospect or outbreak of election-related violence, or if there are concerns about the conduct of the process, which the mission decides might be helped by public comment.

## Dealing with the media



In order to ensure coherence in the messaging of the mission, the Head of Mission is the only person mandated to comment publicly on the conduct of the electoral process. However, in order to maintain an open and transparent approach, other members of the mission can speak to the media, provided they restrict their comments to information about the role and mandate of the mission.

Mission members should be open in explaining the role, mandate and composition of the mission as well as the role of observers. They must not comment on the conduct of the electoral process or express opinion on political parties or candidates. This includes on social media, which it is good practice to avoid using during a mission as tweets or comments could be misconstrued. Observers should avoid making comparisons with other electoral or political situations or with any other elections they have been involved with. If questions arise about CPA UK more broadly they should be referred to the Election Coordinator as the CPA UK or BIMR Secretariat representative, or to the CPA UK HQ Communications Manager.

If asked about the work of the mission, members can use the information provided in the EOM's arrival statement, including the number of observers taking part in the mission and the fact that they have been deployed to different parts of the country/territory. They can also provide information about who they are and where they are from. The following general points can also be made:

- The mission has been invited by the government and opposition to observe the election(s).
- The election(s) is/are important for the country/territory and CPA UK is interested in supporting the process.
- During deployment, observers will meet with a wide range of election stakeholders, including the election administration, political parties, media outlets and civil society organisations. They are keen to hear from those



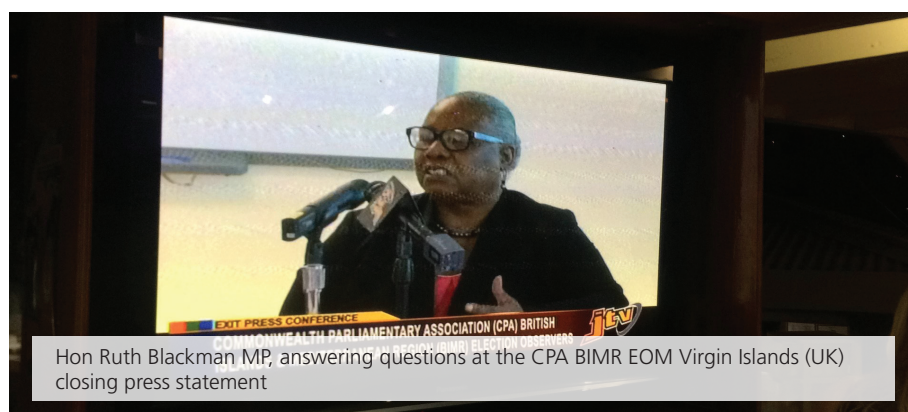
stakeholders if they have concerns or wish to communicate directly with the mission.

- The mission will assess all aspects of the electoral process, including the legal framework, election administration, campaign, media coverage, voting, counting and complaints and appeals.
- The mission will issue a preliminary report after election day and a final report within two months of the close of the mission, which will include recommendations to improve future elections.

If a mission member does not feel comfortable speaking to the media, s/he should feel free to decline a request to do so. In such an instance, the journalist can be referred to the Head of Mission. If they feel that an interview may not have gone well and could harm the mission, s/he should inform the Head of Mission immediately so that s/he can be prepared for any questions that could arise and can, if necessary, discuss the situation with CPA UK to decide whether any action needs to be taken.

If a mission member wishes to write or publish an article about the mission or election after it has taken place, they should seek permission from the Head of Mission and CPA UK. If approval is given, they should share a draft with the Head of Mission and CPA UK for comment and clearance prior to publication.

## Statements



During the course of the mission, an EOM will issue two key statements – an arrival statement and a preliminary report. The final report will be issued within two months of the close of a mission. These public outputs represent the most important tools at a mission's disposal to make a substantive, credible and lasting impact on the electoral process. Missions must therefore ensure that all public reports are of the highest quality, reflecting objectivity, fairness, impartiality, independence, constructive engagement and accuracy of information.

### Arrival statement

Although a press release will be issued in advance of the mission's deployment, there will be an arrival statement issued at an opening press conference at the start of the mission. The statement provides an opportunity for the Head of Mission to introduce the mission's role, mandate and members to the media, election stakeholders and wider public. This is important to establish the mission



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and provide visibility, accurately explain its purpose and address any questions the media may have.

The arrival statement also provides an opportunity to explain how the mission will evaluate the electoral process. In particular, it should outline the areas the mission will be assessing, explain that the assessment will be conducted with reference to relevant international and regional obligations, commitments and standards and underline that the mission is assessing the conduct of the election(s) to help strengthen the electoral and democratic processes in the country or territory.

### **Preliminary report and closing statement**

The preliminary report should be issued at a press conference, led by the Head of Mission, within 48 hours of election day, when media attention is at its peak. The exact timing of the press conference should strike a balance between media and stakeholder interests and the need to ensure that the mission has gathered sufficient, accurate information. As a courtesy, the preliminary report should be sent to the state and electoral authorities in advance of the press conference.

In the report and at the press conference, the Head of Mission should underline that the report is preliminary. It is often issued while aspects of the process, such as final results and complaints and appeals, are still ongoing and these will be taken account of in the final report.

The preliminary report should contain the key findings and conclusions of the mission up to the point at which it is issued. It is likely to receive the largest amount of media coverage so should be prepared very carefully, in a clear and relatively concise manner. The report should begin with an overall preliminary conclusion or executive summary, which can be in the form of a quote from the Head of Mission. This is often quoted by the media, so care should be taken to ensure it reflects the mission's overall conclusion at the time it is issued. Although not comprehensive, this should be followed by a number of sections containing preliminary findings:

- Background
- Legal framework
- Election administration
- Voter registration
- Boundary delimitation
- Party and candidate registration
- Campaign
- Media
- Voting, counting, tabulation
- Complaints and appeals
- Acknowledgements

Ideally the report should not exceed six pages.

The preliminary report should be distributed to local, and if appropriate, regional and international media outlets. It should also be sent to the election administration, government and other key stakeholders and be made available on the CPA UK website. Once the preliminary report has been issued its contents can be used as talking points for media interviews. The preliminary report can also be accompanied by a press release containing the preliminary overall conclusion as well as a quote from the Head of Mission.

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## Final report

The final report should be issued within two months of the close of the mission. It should build on the preliminary report, providing more detailed findings on the various stages of the electoral process as well as an overall assessment of the entire electoral process. As far as possible, these should reflect the findings and conclusions of the preliminary report, but may be altered if additional significant information comes to light after the preliminary report has been issued, or if, upon greater reflection, modifications need to be made. For example to correct mistakes, refine the text, clarify wording or generally improve the content.



The report should also include recommendations to improve the framework and conduct of future elections. These are a critical aspect of a mission's work and can have significant and lasting impact on a country/territory's democratic development and consolidation. The spirit of an observation mission is one of collaboration and support to the host country/territory and recommendations offered in a final report are one of the ways in which this can be demonstrated.

The mission should offer up to 20 recommendations, which should be practical and implementable, reflecting international obligations, commitments, standards and best practice, clearly written in a way that election stakeholders and the wider public will understand. The recommendations should also be ranked in order of importance and urgency so as to ensure that any reporting of the recommendations highlights those for greatest attention.

Once the final report has been completed, it should be sent to the following in-country stakeholders:

- government
- election administration
- political parties
- media outlets
- civil society organisations
- citizen observer groups

The final report should also be published on the CPA UK website. The country/territory's government should make it available on its official government or EMB website.

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CPA UK will also send the final report to the following international and regional organisations (where applicable):

- Election observation organisations
- Regional organisations that the country/territory belong, either as full members, affiliated or observers (EU, OAS, CARICOM, AU, etc)
- Treaty monitoring bodies
- UN Human Rights Committee or other periodic review committees
- Special human rights rapporteurs
- International or regional development agencies based in-country (UNDP, IDB, EU, etc)
- The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK Government)
- UK Parliament all-party parliamentary groups

## Follow-up

Once the final report has been released, CPA UK will follow up with the country/territory in order to offer relevant advice and assistance to further consolidate the electoral, and wider democratic process. The success of such follow-up relies heavily on the quality of the mission's final report as well as the level of confidence and trust the mission has been able to earn in the course of its work.

Examples of follow-up could include the following:

- organise a post-election seminar to discuss the findings, conclusion and recommendations contained in the final report
- build the capacity of newly elected parliamentarians
- support to parliament in reforming election legislation
- provision of technical assistance to the election administration and capacity building support to other election stakeholders, in particular media outlets and civil society organisations

CPA UK may work in partnership with other local, regional or international organisations in carrying out this work.









PART 7:

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## ANNEXES



- I: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVERS, WHICH ACCOMPANIES THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES FOR INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION, ADOPTED AT THE UN IN 2005.**
- II: KEY INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBLIGATIONS, COMMITMENTS & STANDARDS**
- III: RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR OBSERVERS**
- IV: SAMPLE ELECTION DAY REPORT FORM**
- V: SAMPLE CODE OF CONDUCT**

## **Annex I. Code of Conduct for International Election Observers (accompanying Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation)**

International election observation is widely accepted around the world. It is conducted by intergovernmental and international nongovernmental organisations and associations in order to provide an impartial and accurate assessment of the nature of election processes for the benefit of the population of the country where the election is held and for the benefit of the international community. Much therefore depends on ensuring the integrity of international election observation, and all who are part of this international election observation mission, including long-term and short-term observers, members of assessment delegations, specialised observation teams and leaders of the mission, must subscribe to and follow this Code of Conduct.

### **Respect sovereignty and international human rights**

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 elections are internationally recognised human rights, and they require the exercise of a number of fundamental rights and freedoms. Election observers must respect the sovereignty of the host country, as well as the human rights and fundamental freedoms of its people.

### **Respect the laws of the Country and the authority of electoral bodies**

Observers must respect the laws of the host country and the authority of the bodies charged with administering the electoral process. Observers must follow any lawful instruction from the country's governmental, security and electoral authorities. Observers also must maintain a respectful attitude toward electoral officials and other national authorities. 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 international Election Observation Mission**

Observers must respect and protect the integrity of the international election observation mission. This includes following this Code of Conduct, any written instructions (such as a terms of reference, directives and guidelines) and any verbal instructions from the observation mission's leadership. Observers must: attend all of the observation mission's required briefings, trainings and debriefings; become familiar with the election law, regulations and other relevant laws as directed by the observation mission; and carefully adhere to the methodologies employed by the observation mission. Observers also must report to the leadership of the observation mission any conflicts of interest they may have and any improper behavior 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 in the host country. They must not express or exhibit any bias or preference in relation to national authorities, political parties, candidates, referenda issues or in relation to any contentious issues in the election process. Observers also must not conduct any activity that could be reasonably perceived as favouring or providing partisan gain for any political competitor in the host country, such as wearing or displaying any partisan symbols, colors, banners or accepting anything of value from political competitors.

### **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

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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, political party representatives 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 whom or what party or referendum position they voted.

### **Provide appropriate identification**

Observers must display identification provided by the election observation mission, as well as identification required by national authorities, 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, both international and domestic, 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 host-country 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.

## Annex II: Key international election obligations, commitments and standards

**The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948)** is a non-binding resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly but much of it is widely considered to have the status of international customary law. Article 21 of the UDHR states:

21.1: Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

21.2: Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

21.3: The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; [and] shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedure.

### **The key electoral rights established are:**

Participation rights: UDHR provides a reference to the right of participation. This is developed further in other instruments but is generally understood to relate to participation as a candidate and/or voter in an election.

- Periodic elections: Elections should be held at reasonable intervals in order to take account of the changing will of the electors.
- Genuine Elections: This is a broad reference which incorporates key political rights and freedoms, such as freedom of expression and freedom of association, as well as the concept that in order to be genuine an election must be competitive, providing voters with a real choice.
- Universal Suffrage: Participation rights for voters should be as inclusive as possible, ensuring eligibility criteria are reasonable and all eligible sectors of the population are included.
- Equal Suffrage: Sometimes also referred to the principle of 'one person one vote'. Individuals may, of course, have more than one vote depending on the electoral system, but votes should have more or less equal weight.
- Secret Vote: The act of voting should provide individuals with anonymity, so they can mark their ballot and cast their vote without fear of their choice being scrutinised or traced.

**The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (1966)**, a treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, is widely considered to be the principal reference for assessing the conduct of elections. It is legally binding on ratifying countries. Article 25 of the ICCPR states:

Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions:

(a): To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives

(b): To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors.

### **In some respects the ICCPR repeats and reinforces key aspects of the UDHR, but also provides a number of critical new elements:**

- Citizenship: electoral rights and freedoms are to be provided to citizens.
- Right and opportunity: Participation rights must be provided de jure, i.e. through legislation and regulations, and also de facto, i.e. in practice through the implementation of effective measures and procedures.
- Unreasonable restrictions: Rights and freedoms may be limited to a reasonable degree, for instance by having age limits for participation or minimum requirements for candidates, such as financial deposits.
- Free Expression of the will of the electors: Participation rights, political rights and fundamental freedoms are provided so that voters can be free to express their will, including the right to seek legal redress in case of a complaint.

Other articles of the ICCPR are also of critical relevance in establishing the framework of electoral standards. For instance, Article 2 provides for the right to an effective legal remedy, Article 19 for freedom of expression, and Article 22 for freedom of association.

In addition, the UN Human Rights Committee General Comment 25 on the ICCPR adds further explanation and clarifications on the rights and freedoms outlined above. General Comment 25 relates to most electoral elements and is an extremely helpful, practical and tangible tool for election observers with its authoritative interpretation and explanation of the political rights and freedoms relating to the right to participate in public affairs, voting rights and the right of equal access to public service.

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**The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979)**, a treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, provides ratifying states with the obligation to ensure that women enjoy full and equal rights to men, notably in terms of the right to vote and the right to participate as candidates. It also provides that “temporary special measures” may be considered in order to accelerate “de facto equality between men and women.”

**The International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) (1966)**, a treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, provides ratifying states with the obligation to, among other things, “guarantee the right to everyone, without distinction as to race, colour or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law in the enjoyment of ..... political rights, in particular the right to participate in elections – to vote and to stand for election – on the basis of universal and equal suffrage.”

Other key UN international instruments relevant for election observation include the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2006)**, and the **United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) (2003)**.

**Key relevant regional instruments include:**

**The Charter of the Commonwealth (2013)** is a charter setting out the values of the Commonwealth as well as the commitment of its 53 member states to 16 core beliefs, including democracy, human rights, freedom of expression, separation of powers, rule of law, good governance, gender equality and the role of civil society. It recognizes “...the inalienable right of individuals to participate in democratic processes, in particular through free and fair elections in shaping the society in which they live. Governments, political parties and civil society are responsible for upholding and promoting democratic culture and practices and are accountable to the public in this regard.

The **Harare Declaration (1991)** Commonwealth Heads of Government made a series of political commitments, including equal rights for all citizens regardless of gender, race, colour, creed or political belief, the individual's inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic political processes in framing the society in which he or she lives; protection and promotion of the fundamental political values of the Commonwealth, democracy, democratic processes and institutions which reflect national circumstances; fundamental human rights, including equal rights and opportunities for all citizens regardless of race, colour, creed or political belief; and equality for women, so that they may exercise their full and equal rights.

In the **Trinidad and Tobago Affirmation of Commonwealth Values and Principles (2009)**, Commonwealth Heads of Government reaffirmed, among other things, their “belief in the inalienable right of the individual to participate by means of free and democratic political processes” as well as their “commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and human rights covenants and instruments.”

**The Copenhagen Document (1990)** of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) provides a series of political commitments to which OSCE participating States have committed themselves. Paragraph 7, among other things, provides that States will: hold free elections at reasonable intervals; guarantee universal and equal suffrage; ensure votes are cast by secret ballot or equivalent free voting procedure and are counted and reported honestly; respect the right of citizens to seek public office; respect the right of individuals and groups to establish their own parties with necessary legal guarantees to enable them to compete on a basis of equal treatment; ensure campaigning can be conducted in a fair and free atmosphere; and provide for unimpeded access to media.

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), which is responsible for the OSCE's election observation activities, uses the Copenhagen Document as its primary reference point in assessing the conduct of an election. It has consolidated the various OSCE commitments on elections, including those outlined in the Copenhagen Document, into seven key principles: universal, equal, fair, secret, free, transparent and accountable.

Other relevant regional instruments include the **Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) (1950)**, and the **American Convention on Human Rights (AmCHR) (1969)**.



## **Annex III: Recruitment process for observers**

CPA UK is involved in recruiting observers for three types of election observation mission:

1. CPA BIMR Election Observation Missions
2. CPA UK Election Assessment Missions
3. British High Commission and other externally led EOMs.

### **CPA BIMR Election Observation Missions**

CPA BIMR missions typically are comprised of between six and eight Members: Head of Mission, two to four short-term observers, two Election Analysts, and an Election Coordinator. There is a requirement that observers be in pairs for deployment.

#### **Head of Mission**

The Head of Mission is selected from parliamentarians from the British Islands and Mediterranean Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. This includes parliamentarians from the following legislatures:

- Alderney
- Cyprus
- Falkland Islands
- Gibraltar
- Guernsey
- Isle of Man
- Jersey
- Malta
- Northern Ireland
- St Helena
- Scotland
- United Kingdom
- Wales

CPA BIMR invites applications for the post of Head of Mission within a set timeframe.

Invitations for applications are sent to all CPA branches in the region, and the opportunity is advertised on the UK Parliament's All Party & Associate Parliamentary Notice. Parliamentarians apply through their own parliaments and applications are forwarded to CPA UK/BIMR Secretariat.

When the deadline has passed, all applications are sent to the three British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Representatives (to the CPA international Executive Committee). Each Regional Representative places the candidates in order of preference and scores are awarded accordingly. The applicant with the highest score is appointed Head of Mission. The applicant with the second highest score is allocated as the reserve Head of Mission.

#### **Observers**

Observers are typically sourced from legislatures or Election Management Bodies in the same region as the election being observed (with the exception of EAMs, where observers are sourced from across the Commonwealth). To achieve geographical balance, and because of the location of most UK Overseas Territories in which missions operate, observers tend to be parliamentarians from the Commonwealth Caribbean region, including legislatures in other Overseas Territories.

Observers are invited to apply through their CPA Branches.

If CPA UK receives more than two applications, the CPA BIMR Regional Secretary will select an observer based on appropriate criteria (experience, gender balance, etc).

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## **Election/Legal & Political/Campaign Analysts**

The qualification for Election/Legal and Political/Campaign Analysts are as follows:

- University degree in international relations, law, political science, social science, or related field
- Approximately 10 years of relevant professional work experience in national election administration, non-governmental organisations, international organisations, election observation and electoral assistance
- Prior Core Team experience with OSCE/ODIHR or EU Election Observation missions (EOMs) or other credible international election observation institutions
- Excellent election expertise and good knowledge of the international and regional obligations, commitments and standards for democratic elections
- Excellent political analysis skills
- Excellent analytical and report drafting skills
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English
- Computer literate; word processing skills
- Available for consultation (by phone or email) until approval of the Final Report

## **Election Coordinator**

The Election Coordinator is a member of staff from CPA UK who is responsible for the planning and implementation of the mission.

## **Gender and regional representation**

CPA UK tries to ensure a regional and gender balance within all its missions. In an average mission, ideally there is a 50:50 gender ratio and at least two observers from within the region of the election being observed.

## **British High Commission led Election Observation Missions**

CPA UK will be approached by the relevant British High Commission in the country where the election will take place to act as a facilitator in sourcing observers.

CPA UK will publicise the opportunity on the All Party & Associate Parliamentary Notice.

Any applications received are forwarded to the relevant High Commission who will allocate the place(s) in accordance with their own criteria.

## Annex IV: Sample voting report form

Team Member Names: \_\_\_\_\_ Area/District Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Polling Station (PS) Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Visit: From \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_

*Circle all responses*

### Opening (1st PS only)

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Are all polling officials and materials present? | Yes | No |
| 2. Is the ballot box shown to be empty and locked?  | Yes | No |
| 3. Does polling commence on time?                   | Yes | No |

### Voting (All PS)

- |   |         |         |
|---|---------|---------|
| 1. Are any campaign activities being undertaken?                                    | Yes     | No      |
| 2. Are voters free to reach PS without intimidation or obstacle?                    | Yes     | No      |
| 3. Are police present and behaving appropriately?                                   | Yes     | No      |
| 4. Is the queue orderly?  | Yes     | No      |
| 5. Is there any indication/allegation of vote buying?                               | Yes     | No      |
| 6. Is there reasonable access to PS, including persons for persons with disability? | Yes     | No      |
| 7. Are polling officials and materials present?                                     | Yes     | No      |
| 8. Are party agents present? (Circle)   | Party 1 | Party 2 |
| 9. Is the process transparent for agents and observers?                             | Party 3 | Party 4 |
| 10. Is the PS well organised and a conducive atmosphere for voters?                 | Yes     | No      |
| 11. Are voters properly identifying themselves?                                     | Yes     | No      |
| 12. Are voters found on the list?   | Yes     | No      |
| 13. Are there any objections by agents, e.g. for ID of voters?                      | Yes     | No      |
| 14. Are voters checked for ink?   | Yes     | No      |
| 15. Is the ballot being properly administered?                                      | Yes     | No      |
| 16. Are voters instructed on voting in appropriate manner?                          | Yes     | No      |
| 17. Are persons requiring assistance helped in proper manner?                       | Yes     | No      |
| 18. Are there any examples of group voting?   | Yes     | No      |
| 19. Are there any examples of proxy voting?   | Yes     | No      |
| 20. Is voting done in secret?   | Yes     | No      |
| 21. Is ink applied to all voters?   | Yes     | No      |
| 22. Do you see any illegal or incorrect voting practices?                           | Yes     | No      |
| 23. Have any complaints been made?  | Yes     | No      |

Rate the process in the PS:

- |                                  |          |     |      |           |
|----------------------------------|----------|-----|------|-----------|
| 1. Administration of the Process | Very Bad | Bad | Good | Very Good |
| 2. Voters' understanding         | Very Bad | Bad | Good | Very Good |

### Closing (Last PS only)

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Are all persons waiting in line at the close able to vote?      | Yes | No |
| 2. Is the total number of voters counted?                          | Yes | No |
| 3. Are unused and spoiled ballots counted?                         | Yes | No |
| 4. Are all materials properly secured in envelopes etc?            | Yes | No |
| 5. Are materials collected / delivered in a prompt, secure manner? | Yes | No |

**Comments...** (Please record details of any problems observed, or any particularly good electoral conduct below)

## Annex IV: Sample counting report form

Team Member Names: \_\_\_\_\_ Area/District Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Polling Station (PS) Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Visit: From \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_

*Circle all responses*

### Counting

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Was the number of voters on the voter list established?                               | Yes | No |
| 2. Were the signatures on the voter list counted?  | Yes | No |
| 3. Were the unused ballot papers counted?  | Yes | No |
| 4. Were the number of spoiled ballot papers counted?                                     | Yes | No |
| 5. Were the seals of the ballot box/es intact and undamaged before opening?              | Yes | No |
| 6. Were the ballot box/es opened transparently in front of all present?                  | Yes | No |
| 7. Were the total numbers of ballots in each ballot box counted separately and recorded? | Yes | No |
| 8. Were all ballot papers handled in a secure and transparent manner?                    | Yes | No |
| 9. Were the valid/invalid ballots determined in a reasonable and consistent manner?      | Yes | No |
| 10. Were ballots always allocated to the correct party/candidate?                        | Yes | No |
| 11. Were all PS officials able to examine the ballot papers?                             | Yes | No |
| 12. Were any recounts conducted?   | Yes | No |
| 13. Was the prescribed sequence of steps in the counting process strictly followed?      | Yes | No |
| 14. Did all the polling officials agree on the figures entered in the protocol?          | Yes | No |
| 15. Did any PS official refuse to sign the protocol?                                     | Yes | No |
| 16. Did all requesting entitled persons receive a copy of the protocol?                  | Yes | No |
| 17. Was a copy of the protocol publicly posted outside the PS?                           | Yes | No |
| 18. Was the PS overcrowded and/or unruly?  | Yes | No |
| 19. Did you observe any falsification of voter list entries?                             | Yes | No |
| 20. Did you observe any falsification of the ballots?                                    | Yes | No |
| 21. Did you observe any falsification of the protocols?                                  | Yes | No |
| 22. Did you observe any significant procedural errors or omissions?                      | Yes | No |
| 23. Were unauthorised person/s present in the PS during counting?                        | Yes | No |
| 24. Were any complaints made?  | Yes | No |

Rate the process in the PS:

- |                                  |          |     |      |           |
|----------------------------------|----------|-----|------|-----------|
| 1. Administration of the Process | Very Bad | Bad | Good | Very Good |
| 2. Voters' understanding         | Very Bad | Bad | Good | Very Good |

**Comments...** (Please record details of any problems observed, or any particularly good electoral conduct below)



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## Annex V: CPA UK Code of Conduct

1. Observers will respect the sovereignty of the host country and will respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of its people.
2. Observers will maintain strict impartiality in the conduct of their duties and will, at no time, publicly express or exhibit any bias or preference in relation to national authorities, parties, candidates, or with reference to any issues in contention in the election process.
3. Observers will undertake their duties in an unobtrusive manner and will not interfere in the election process. Observers may raise questions with election officials and bring irregularities to their attention, but they must not give instructions or countermand their decisions.
4. Observers will remain on duty throughout Election Day, including observation of the vote count and, if instructed, the next stage of tabulation.
5. Observers will base all conclusions on their personal observations or on clear and convincing facts or evidence.
6. Observers will not make any comments to the media on the election process or on the substance of their observations, and any comment to the media will be limited to general information about the observation mission and the role of the observers. The same will apply to social media.
7. Observers will not take any unnecessary or undue risks. Each observer's personal safety overrides all other considerations.
8. Observers will carry any prescribed identification issued by the host government or election commission and will identify themselves to any authority upon request.
9. Observers will comply with all national laws and regulations.
10. Observers will exhibit the highest levels of personal discretion and professional behaviour at all times.
11. Observers will attend all required mission briefings and debriefings and adhere to the deployment plan and all other instructions provided by the CPA UK Election Observation or Assessment Mission.
12. Observers will cooperate with other election observers.

Signature:

Observer:

Country:

DATE:

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]





The background of the page features a photograph of a wooden ceiling with diagonal planks. Overlaid on the lower half of the page is a world map with a textured, topographical appearance. Two dark purple rectangular boxes are positioned on the left side of the page, containing white text.

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