

VOTES WITHOUT VIOLENCE

GUIDANCE FOR WRITING REPORTS



This tool was developed by Caroline Hubbard and Claire DeSoi for NDI's Votes Without Violence program and toolkit.

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Goal of this Guidance:

External public communication is an important part of any citizen election observation. With it, observers can bring transparency to an election and build support among citizens and election stakeholders for actions to address and mitigate VAW-E in both the short- and long-term. As part of its communications strategies, citizen observation groups should release periodic statements or reports regarding the data they have collected. These reports, released during the pre-electoral period or on or after election day, can provide analysis, and specific recommendations to address violence and constraints on women's political participation, or discuss how violence has impacted men and women differently. Final reports should contain a more detailed analysis of any data on violence collected during the observation, as well as information on the barriers and opportunities facing women specifically, and the ways violence manifests and affects them.

This tool suggests points for observer groups to keep in mind while writing periodic statements and final observation reports, but they will be especially useful for detailed final reports.

When discussing data and methodology: *Citizen observation groups should include points about how they collected data in a gender-aware way, including:*

- » Their approach to building checklist questions, critical incident forms and an overall observation methodology that recognized and accounted for the different experiences of women and men throughout the election;
- » Gender requirements in terms of recruiting and delegating observers, or other efforts to ensure a gender balance in the structure of the observation; and
- » Gender-sensitive guidance or recommendations that were included in trainings or materials distributed.

When presenting results and analysis: *Observation groups should draw out the most relevant information according to gender. For example, in addition to disaggregating all data by gender, groups should consider including:*

- » Gender considerations that went into the process of analysis;
- » Discussion of any differences in the levels of violence against men and women;
- » Specific results or connections they made that illustrate the different experiences of women and men in election processes or the ways they were affected differently by violence;
- » Discussion of any specifically gendered analysis of the data collected; and
- » Whether, or in what ways, the gender lens applied during the observation contributed to a new or deeper understanding of the kinds of political violence occurring,

For final reports, groups may also wish to include:

- » The results of any efforts to mitigate violence against women in elections;
- » Actions or recommendations for action, such as advocacy or legal action, to address the types of violence against women that were observed; and
- » Lessons learned or improvements that could be made for future observations.

When discussing recommendations: *Observation groups can use reports to highlight and expand on priority issues that need to be addressed. This is especially important in final election observation reports, since recommendations are a critical part of advocacy efforts between elections, which is the time to push for positive change in the run-up to the next election. For example, groups should consider:*

- » Developing recommendations for action out of any incidents of VAW-E the group observed:
 - In reports issued over the course of the observation, these can be specific recommendations for short-term action.
 - In a final report, groups can consider whether the violence observed is already illegal; if so, a report provides a platform to put forward targeted recommendations to improve existing policies or laws to improve enforcement and end impunity.
- » Targeting these recommendations toward specific institutions or entities, encouraging them to take preventative or mitigating action:
 - This may include, for example, specific recommendations for the electoral management body (EMB) to implement electoral policies and procedures to counter types of VAW-E that were observed, or legislation to criminalize and penalize VAW-E.
 - Recommendations might also be addressed to parties to implement internal rules and policies to counter VAW-E and promote women's meaningful participation.
- » Dividing recommendations in the final report into "short-term" and "long-term" strategies:
 - This division can help target the recommendations and provide realistic goals to prevent VAW-E and address barriers for women's participation throughout the run-up to the next election.