

# VOTES WITHOUT VIOLENCE

## EXAMPLE DISCUSSION GUIDE: IDENTIFYING NON-TRADITIONAL STAKEHOLDERS



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## Overview:

In order for violence forecasting to be effective, citizen election observer groups, including observers on the ground, should have plans of action if and when warning signs are identified. This includes having an established network of actors that may be able to address the large variety of early warning signs and indicators of violence. When a warning sign is identified, the observer group and their observers will need to understand who the most appropriate actors for resolving it is. When it comes to violence targeting women, the stakeholders may be different from those who would normally respond to general electoral violence. This is because women are often afraid to report incidents of violence for fear of reprisal or face significant barriers in receiving fair and safe responses from security forces, police or governing officials.

This document provides a guide for election observation groups for a facilitated discussion to identify what potential service delivery or community-based organizations exist in their country and context that could be engaged in order for the observation group to develop and implement an effective mitigation strategy. At the same time, it can help them to identify the key legal and social barriers to ensuring relevant stakeholders (such as police, political parties, community/religious leaders and security forces) are willing to engage in addressing violence targeting these two marginalized groups, as well as strategies for engaging them.

## Discussion Guide:

Barriers for mitigating and preventing VAW-E

- » What barriers do women victims face in accessing the police or security forces in order to mitigate violence?
  - It may be useful to include the barriers women may face in accessing services and justice for general domestic violence in the discussion, in addition to electoral violence, as there are often similarities between the two.
- » What barriers exist for organizations and individuals that are attempting to mitigate violence against women? Again, include organizations and individuals that are also trying to mitigate non-election-related violence.
  - Can the barriers these organizations and individuals face be addressed in advance, before any violence occurs? How?

## Stakeholders

- » Who are the stakeholders in the country that would need to be engaged in order for the citizen observation group to address violence targeting women?
  - What stakeholders exist at the national level?
  - What stakeholders exist at the community level?

## Strategies

- » What mechanisms or strategies, if any, already exist for **mitigating** violence against women in the country? What mechanisms or strategies, if any, have been used in past elections to mitigate violence against women?

- These could include community dialogues, alternative dispute resolutions or advocacy. What strategies have anti-violence civil society organizations used in the past? What strategies have victim rights advocates employed?
- » Do any mechanisms already exist to prevent violence against women? What are they?
  - How can these mechanisms be used to mitigate violence as it occurs in the electoral cycle?
- » Are there any services that work to support victims and survivors and address general violence against women in the country? Could they be engaged as part or in support of the citizen election group's mitigation strategy?
  - Are there organizations for women that serve as victims' advocates in the justice and security systems? These could be organizations that work to get the police involved in cases of violence, or that work to mitigate the effects of violence.
  - Are there organizations or individuals—whether at the community or national level—that the election observation group, its partners or its observers should reach out to and engage as part of its strategy to mitigate violence against women?