**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN ELECTIONS (VAW-E)**

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS: ELECTION DAY OBSERVATION**

**Guidance**

The following tool provides example questions that observation groups may wish to include on their data collection forms for an **election day observation**. It has been designed as a reference for citizen observation groups, and provides an example of what questions election observation groups may wish to ask to record incidents of violence against women in elections (VAW-E). The questions presented here should be regarded as a set of options. Depending on the process or processes a group is observing, or the priority issues and indicators its leadership has chosen to focus on, groups can select and adapt relevant VAW-E questions and response options to integrate into their forms, which should be tailored to the particular electoral context. Groups should also consider which questions should require the observer to fill out a critical incident report – some questions that may require an incident report have been marked in grey below.

Some explanations have been included to provide more detailed information about certain questions or sections. While forms should not include these details, observation groups should consider developing similar explanations to include in their training materials for observers.

**Location and General Information**

Forms should include information about the location at which the observer was recording data, as well as a way to identify the individual observer in case follow-up is needed. They should also include emergency numbers that an observer can call in case there is a need for immediate assistance or response.

**Questions for Observers at a Polling Station**

In many situations, observation groups may choose to deploy observers to observe polling stations directly, for example, to conduct a Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT).[[1]](#footnote-0) These observers, whether positioned inside or outside of the station, can assess the general atmosphere and security situation of the location, or record any incidents of violence against women that may occur in or near the station, which can have a significant impact on women’s participation and the democratic integrity of the election.

The timing and accessibility of a polling station can impact women’s participation and the safety of women voters, especially in situations where there may be security concerns around the location or timing of polling stations. Polling procedures may also present concerns, if they are not applied uniformly or consistently to all voters. Observation groups may also wish to record the gender composition of the polling station staff and leadership, as a potential indicator of whether women were able to participate equally in election administration.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Did the polling station open on time? | | | | | |
| Yes | | No | | Don’t Know | |
| Was the polling station to all potential voters? | | | | | |
| Yes, to men | Yes, to women | | Yes, to both | | No, none |

***Incidents at a Polling Station***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Were any voters unable to access the polling center? | | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |
| Were there incidents of intimidation or threats targeting women voters? | | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |
| Were there incidents of intimidation or harassment targeting women officials? | | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |
| Were there incidents of intimidation or harassment targeting women observers? | | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |
| Were any eligible women voters not permitted to vote? | | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |
| Were there any incidents of proxy voting? | | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |
| Were any women voters accompanied into the polling station or the voting booth? | | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |
| Were there any physical attacks on voters at the polling station? | | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |
| Were there any physical attacks on officials or observers at the polling station? | | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |
| Was there any sexual harassment of women voters at the polling station? | | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |
| Was there any sexual harassment of women officials or observers at the polling station? | | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |
| Were the conditions for a secret ballot maintained? | | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |

**Questions for Roaming Observers**

In some cases, observation groups may wish to have some or all of their observers stationed in municipalities or communities but not confined to a polling station. This can allow observers to collect data about the general electoral environment, including any violence toward women candidates, voters, party agents or election officials that may take place away from the polling stations.

***Incidents at Polling Stations***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Did you witness or hear of any voters who were not able to access the polling station? | | | |
| Yes, men | Yes, women | Yes, both | No, none |
| Did you witness or hear of any incidents of intimidation or harassment during voting that targeted election officials at the polling station? | | | |
| Yes, men | Yes, women | Yes, both | No, none |
| Did you witness or hear of any incidents of intimidation or harassment during voting that targeted observers at the polling station? | | | |
| Yes, men | Yes, women | Yes, both | No, none |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Did you witness or hear of any incidents where images or symbols that intimidated women voters were displayed near the polling station? | | |
| Yes | No | Don't Know |

***Incidents Targeting Voters***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Did you witness or hear of any incidents where women were prevented from going to cast their vote? | | |
| Yes | No | Don't Know |
| Did you witness or hear of any incidents of intimidation or threats during voting that affected women on their way to vote or after voting? | | |
| Yes | No | Don't Know |
| Did you witness or hear of any physical attacks on women on their way to vote or after voting? | | |
| Yes | No | Don't Know |
| Did you witness or hear of any physical or sexual harassment of women on their way to vote or after voting? | | |
| Yes | No | Don't Know |
| Did you witness or hear of any incidents where others attempted to influence or coerce women's votes (e.g.: by giving or promising money, food, gifts, etc.)? | | |
| Yes | No | Don't Know |
| Did you witness or hear of any attempts to steal or sabotage women's votes? | | |
| Yes | No | Don't Know |
| Did you witness or hear of any media reports questioning the competence of women voters? | | |
| Yes | No | Don't Know |

***Incidents Targeting Candidates***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Did you witness or hear of any candidate inciting his/her supporters to commit acts of violence on election day? | | | |
| Yes, against men | Yes, against women | Yes, against both | No, none |
| Did you witness or hear of incidents of social media being used to threaten or incite violence against voters, candidates or election officials on election day? | | | |
| Yes, against men | Yes, against women | Yes, against both | No, none |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Did you witness or hear of any incidents where the campaign materials or advertisements of women candidates were destroyed on election day? | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |
| Did you witness or hear of any incidents where the private property of women candidates or their supporters was destroyed on election day? | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |

***Incidents Targeting Women Candidates, Voters or Election Officials***

Observation groups may wish to include several categories of victim (e.g.: candidates, voters, party agents or election officials) in one question, or focus their observation on one or more specific categories, depending on the focus and priorities of their monitoring efforts.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Did you witness or hear of any incidents where women candidates, voters or election officials were kidnapped on election day? | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |
| Did you witness or hear of any incidents where women candidates, voters or election officials were assassinated on election day? | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |
| Did you witness or hear of any incidents where women candidates, voters or election officials were sexually assaulted on election day? | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |
| Did you witness or hear of any incidents where women candidates, voters or election officials were raped on election day? | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |
| Did you witness or hear of any hate speech or derogatory language being used to describe women voters, candidates or election officials on election day? | | |
| Yes | No | Don’t Know |

1. Observation groups should note, that some methodologies such as a PVT, will have a significant effect on the number and type of questions they are able to include on observation forms, and subsequently the data that can be collected. For more information on PVTs, please see the NDI handbook [*The Quick Count and Election Observation: An NDI Guide for Civic Organizations and Political Parties*](https://www.ndi.org/node/12993). [↑](#footnote-ref-0)