



**MONITORING AND
MITIGATING**

**ELECTORAL
VIOLENCE**

**THROUGH NONPARTISAN
CITIZEN ELECTION
OBSERVATION**



CONCLUSION

Monitoring and mitigating the potentials for electoral violence involves a number of strategies from a multitude of actors. With nonpartisan reputations and networks of hundreds or thousands of citizen observers, citizen election monitoring organizations are well suited to play key roles in violence monitoring and mitigation. Monitoring groups should develop complementary, multi-pronged approaches to encourage peace while monitoring the electoral process. Tracking and reporting violence to hold perpetrators, including irresponsible media, accountable, identifying early warning signs, involving everyday citizens in reporting violence and nurturing local-level mediation are all methodologies that citizen election monitors should consider when designing their monitoring effort, particularly in conflict-prone environments.

Integrating these approaches into a monitoring effort will require additional human and financial resources. However, organizations can apply these methodologies to varying degrees to take into account resource constraints. Some citizen monitoring groups have employed many of these approaches at the same time, while other groups may prioritize approaches based on which would have the most impact in their particular context. Generally, groups already planning to conduct long-term election observation should keep in mind that incorporating at least some degree of violence monitoring and mitigation into the LTO effort can be done relatively seamlessly, since the observer infrastructure would already be in place.

When conducted credibly, elections do not create violence. However, because of their high-stakes nature, they can exacerbate pre-existing or unresolved conflicts. The nature and causes of electoral violence differ greatly across different political contexts. Citizen election monitors must conduct thorough assessments before designing their programs and maintain the flexibility to adapt them if new developments arise. Exposing violence, particularly when significant corruption and/or organized crime are involved, can put citizen election monitors at great risk. Observer security should always be a priority in order to recognize, support and protect citizens that are actively engaging in promoting a violence-free electoral process.

Monitoring and mitigation efforts can significantly improve the potentials for peaceful, credible elections. Many nonpartisan citizen election monitoring groups and coalitions are contributing to curtailing potentials for election-related violence in their countries and share experiences with organizations in other countries. Further and more active sharing of experiences and techniques will enhance these efforts around the globe.