

ELECTION COMMISSION GILGIT-BALTISTAN

NOTIFICATION

Islamabad the 6th October, 2020.

No.ELC-1(1)/GBE/2020 -- In exercise of the powers conferred upon it under Section 233 of the Election Act, 2017 and all other powers enabling it in that behalf, the Election Commission of Gilgit-Baltistan is pleased to issue the Code of Conduct for national and international observers /international media for the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly General Elections, 2020 and subsequent bye-elections:

- (1) Every person who participates in election observation individually or as a member of a local group / organization or International Election Observation Mission must read and understand this Code of Conduct and shall sign a pledge annexed to this Code.
- (2) International Observers shall respect the sovereignty of Pakistan as well as the fundamental rights and freedom of its people.
- (3) Observers shall adhere to the laws/constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and respect the authority of the Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan and its election officials.
- (4) Observers shall follow instructions issued from- time to time by the Election Commission and State authorities including security officials and maintain a respectful attitude towards them.
- (5) Strict political impartiality shall be maintained by International Observers at all times during election process. They shall not exhibit any bias or preference with regard to national authorities, political parties and candidates as well as any issue related to the process of elections.
- (6) Observers shall not conduct or participate in any activity that may generate an impression of favouring or opposing any political party or a candidate.
- (7) The Observer will have right to ask any question and to clear any query but they will not obstruct directly or indirectly in any pre-election, election and post election process.
- (8) Observers shall display their official identification badges, issued by the Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan, at all times and shall present it to electoral officials and other national authorities when requested.
- (9) Observers shall ensure that all their observations are impartial, objective and depict the highest standards of accuracy.
- (10) Individual Observer shall not make any personal comments about his/her observation or conclusion on the election process to the media. Observation Organizations or groups should ensure that only their authorized persons give comment about the election process.
- (11) Observer Organizations may share their findings, methodology and recommendations with the Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan.
- (12) Observers shall maintain proper personal behaviour and respect others, including exhibiting sensitivity for culture and customs of the country and observe the highest level of professional conduct at all times.

- (13) All organizations requesting accreditation from the Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan shall be responsible for education and training of their individual observers in electoral laws and procedures, including this Code.
- (14) The International Observers intending to visit Pakistan shall submit their visa applications well in time, according to the rules laid down by relevant authorities of the Government of Pakistan. No observer shall stay in Pakistan beyond the duration of granted visa.
- (15) International Observers shall comply with advisories that may be issued by the Government or security agencies to ensure their safety during their stay in Pakistan.
- (16) In case of violation of this Code of Conduct, the Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan reserves the right to withdraw observer accreditation of an individual Observer or an Observer Mission. The authority to determine the violation also rests with the Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan.

By order of the Chief Election Commissioner Gilgit-Baltistan.

S/D

(ABID RAZA)

Election Commissioner
Gilgit-Baltistan

PLEDGE TO ABIDE BY THE CODE OF CONDUCT

I have read and understood the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers that was provided by the Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan, I, hereby pledge that I will follow the Code of Conduct and that during my stay in Gilgit-Baltistan , I will conduct myself and my activities in accordance with it.

I have no conflict of interest, political, economic or other, that will interfere with my ability to be an impartial election observer and to follow the Code of Conduct.

Singed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan

Guidelines for National and International Election Observers

Legal Provisions for National and International Election Observers:

The Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan is constitutionally mandated to conduct elections in a free and fair manner. To enhance the credibility of such elections, transparency is required at all stages of the electoral process. The Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan (ECGB) welcomes International Election Observers to observe the pre-election activities, visit to polling stations on the Election Day and post-poll activities, in specified areas of the country.

Guidelines:

The following guidelines would be strictly observed by National and International Election Observers:

I. Role of the Observers

(A) Polling Day Activities:

National and International Election Observers may observe all aspects of management and conduct of the election, including actual polling on the Election Day without interfering in the proceedings. They may also observe vote counting and result consolidation. National and International Election Observers:

- (i) may observe but not participate in activities like campaign, voting, counting, etc.;
- (ii) would not interfere in any way with the election activity at the polling stations;
- (iii) would not advise the Polling Staff on any procedural matter;
- (iv) would not directly question voters while in the vicinity of the Polling Station;

- (v) would not make any announcement of results of voting at any polling station or constituency;
- (vi) would not carry out any exit poll or projection of results; and
- (vii) would not have any supervisory or executive role in the conduct of election.

(B) Media Interaction:

- (i) In order not to influence the electoral process, National and International Election Observers would not make any media statements without express consultation with the Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan; and
- (ii) Head of Election Observation Mission would not make any public statement before the declaration of unofficial results by the Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan.

II. Logistical arrangements:

National and International Election Observers:

- (i) must recognize and respect the sovereignty of Pakistan;
- (ii) would be fully responsible for their logistical arrangements, including accommodation and transportation;
- (iii) would register themselves with the Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan immediately upon arrival in the country; and

Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan would arrange a briefing for National and International Election Observers.

III. Neutrality:

National and International Election Observers would observe strict neutrality, shall not support any political party in Gilgit-Baltistan and not involve in any activity which may affect the conduct of elections.

IV. Accreditation:

National and International Election Observers must be accredited with the Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan.

The Election Commission, upon receipt of request, shall issue accreditation cards to National and International Election Observers.

V. Interpreters:

International Election Observers may hire services of Pakistani interpreters. These Interpreters must not be members of any political party in Pakistan and would remain non-partisan and neutral.

Interpreters would also register with the Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan.

VI. Observation Areas:

International Election Observers would choose areas for election observation in strict consultation with the Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan

International Election Observers would make the area selection in a balanced manner in order to avoid excessive concentrations in any particular constituency or area.

Entry into areas closed due to security and/or administrative reasons would not be permitted.

VII. Polling Stations:

- (i) National and International Election Observers must display accreditation cards issued by the Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan at all times;
- (ii) entry into the polling stations would be strictly on the basis of accreditation cards;
- (iii) only one International observer team and interpreter may enter a polling station at a time;
- (iv) National and International Election Observers would not remain inside the polling station for a long period. This

- would afford other observers an opportunity to also observe polling;
- (v) National and International Election Observers would not be allowed entry into the spaces designated for voters to cast their ballot;
 - (vi) National and International Election Observers would strictly adhere to all legal and administrative requirements of the Presiding Officer/Assistant Presiding Officer/Polling Staff; and
 - (vii) Presiding Officer/Assistant Presiding Officer/Polling Staff may ask any National and International Election Observer to withdraw from the Polling Station at any time if it is deemed that his/her presence is in any way prejudicial to conduct of the electoral process.

VII. Violation of Law/Guidelines

Election Commission Gilgit-Baltistan reserves the right to cancel the accreditation and visa of an International Election Observer if it deems that a violation of code of conduct, guidelines, rules, procedures and electoral process has taken place in any way or form.
