



Reporting on

ELECTIONS

A TOOLKIT FOR JOURNALISTS IN MYANMAR

Reporting on Elections:

A Toolkit for Journalists in Myanmar



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Foreword

The media's vital role in any society is to ensure that democracy flourishes. During elections, the media act as sources of information for the public and ensure free and fair elections. But while the emergence of new technologies has helped improve the media's roles, it has also gravely affected the information ecosystem especially during critical periods like elections.

The proliferation of disinformation, exacerbated by the quick distribution of malicious information through social media, has tainted the kind of information that the public receives which affects the decisions they make, especially the critical decision of selecting leaders and policy actions that best represent their ideals and goals.

The media are in the best position to combat disinformation as they have adapted to new technologies improving their capacity to gather and distribute information. Media-led and even CSO-led fact-checking initiatives have been increasing in recent years, as well.

But at the same time, claims of bias in the media, the lack of training of reporters, and threats and attacks against press freedom, are some of the main challenges they face that prevent them from fully functioning as legitimate sources of information and vanguards of democracy.

The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) recognizes that the media's roles as sources of information and as watchdogs of the people's votes are important and that in order to enrich these roles, there is a need to help address the challenges they face.

In Myanmar, prior to the 2015 general elections, ANFREL has engaged the media by providing capacity-building workshops and platforms for the media and various stakeholders to engage in discussions towards ensuring free and fair elections and furthering democratic values in the country.

We continue the work as ANFREL, in cooperation with the Myanmar Journalists Network (MJN) and the Myanmar Press Council (MPC), launch a new set of activities for the Myanmar media that seeks to improve how elections are being covered in time for the 2020 general elections. The first of many activities is the publication of this toolkit, **“Reporting on Elections: A Toolkit for Journalists in Myanmar.”**

ANFREL conducted two consultation meetings with journalists from different parts of the country to better understand the challenges they face and the areas of assistance they need in covering elections. The inputs from those meetings are incorporated in this media toolkit which contains fundamental focus areas for the media to understand the electoral process, appreciate their roles in elections and democracy, and gain techniques to better perform their duties.

ANFREL would like to thank the Canadian Embassy in Yangon and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs for their generous support and mutual belief in promoting free and fair elections through empowering key electoral stakeholders like the media. We also extend our deep appreciation to our staff, members, and partners for their continuous support and hard work. Without them, this project would not have been possible.

ANFREL sincerely offers this toolkit to the members of the Myanmar media as a guide as they embark on an important journey towards providing the public the information they need to make informed decisions and as a point of discussion and reflection on the importance of their work in upholding and protecting free and fair elections in the country.

“ကျေးဇူးတင်ပါတယ်”

Chandanie Watawala
Executive Director - ANFREL

Abbreviation and Myanmar Specific Terms

Ads	Advertisements
AESF	The Asian Electoral Stakeholders' Forums
AFPFL	Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League
ANFREL	Asian Network for Free Elections
AP	Associated Press
APC	Association for Progressive Communications
Apps	Applications
AV	Alternative Vote
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BSPP	Burma Socialist Program Party
BV	Block Vote
C_A_N – Org	Civil Authorize Negotiate Organization
CDI	Civic Development Institute
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)
CPB	Communist Party of Burma
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007)
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DRI	Democracy Reporting International
EFF	Electronic Frontier Foundation

EMBs	Election Management Bodies
FPTP	First past the post
GIJN	The Digital security resource page of the Global Investigative Journalism Network
HBO	HornBill Organization
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1969)
ICPRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990)
ID	Identification
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IMS	International Media Support
INGOs	International Non-governmental Organizations
IRI	International Republican Institute
KYO	Karen Youth Organization
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual, Intersex, Queer
MIDO	Myanmar ICT for Development Organization
MILI	Myanmar Independent Living Initiative

MYNFREL	Myanmar Network for Free and Fair Elections
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NLD	National League for Democracy
NMF	New Myanmar Foundation
OMI	Open Myanmar Initiative
PACE	People's Alliance for Credible Elections
PBV	Party Block Vote
PI	Privacy International
PJM	Peace and Justice Myanmar
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
RSF	<i>Reporters Sans Frontières</i> (in English, Reporters Without Borders)
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SMS	Short Message Service
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
SPJ	Society of Professional Journalists
TRS	Two-round system
TV	Television
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
UEC	Union Election Commission
USA	United States of America
USDP	The Union Solidarity and Development Party



1. Introduction

The media's primary function during elections is to provide information that would help the electorate make informed decisions. They also act as watchdogs serving as independent monitors of power against misdeeds and abuses. But in order for the media to fulfill their functions, they have to be free as well as competent.

Myanmar, as a transitioning democracy, continues to define and build the foundation of its democratic institutions including the media thus shortcomings in both its press freedom and journalistic competencies are observed.

While press freedom and the people's right to access information through the media are guaranteed under the law, threats to and attacks against journalists tend to undermine such freedoms. The Paris-based media organization *Reporters Sans Frontières* (RSF, Reporters Without Borders) has ranked Myanmar 138th out of 180 countries in the 2019 Press Freedom Index. This is an improvement from the country's ranking in 2013 (155 out of 180 countries) but is a declining trend since it got its highest ranking of 131st in 2017.

The digression from the improving state of press freedom in Myanmar was captured around 2017 to 2018 when several journalists were arrested including the two Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, who worked on the investigation of the murder of 10 Rohingya boys. Article 66 (d) of the 2013 Telecommunications Law was also seen as a challenge to press freedom and freedom of expression.

Despite the challenges to press freedom in the country, the Myanmar press is an emerging vibrant one, which is enthusiastic and committed to freely practice journalism.

The media have been observed to be freer in reporting on elections compared in the past, as the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) noted in its report on the election observation mission for the 2015 Myanmar General and Local Elections. The media's coverage of the 2015 elections was seen largely as "neutral" with a focus on the process and outcome of the election.

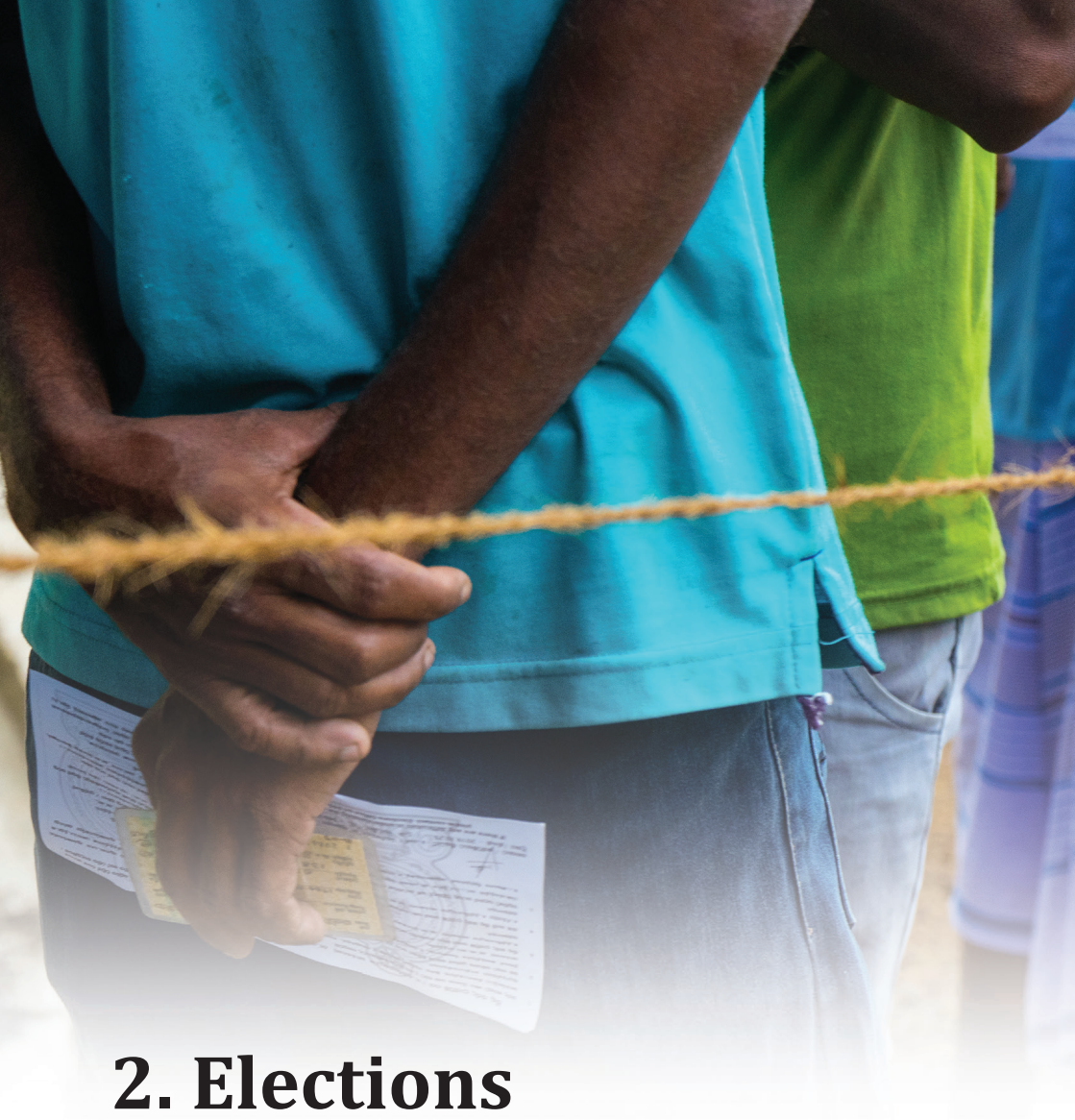
The succeeding by-elections, however, would've been good opportunities for the media to practice reporting during elections but the coverage was observed to be limited in 2017 and 2018. Despite this, the media were still seen as primary sources of information and played a significant role in disseminating information about the by-elections and the parties and candidates.

As Myanmar is set to hold its general election in 2020 where the country's commitment to democracy will be scrutinized, the media will once again be put to the task of outdoing itself in the coverage of the previous elections with short yet significant experience under a different level of media freedom and the challenges they currently face.

Elections are complex processes that could be difficult to navigate if reporters are not fully equipped with the knowledge and experience yet any misstep, perceived bias, or underreporting for the part of the media would help compromise the legitimacy of the outcome of the process.

This toolkit seeks to address the gaps in reporting elections by providing fundamental knowledge on the elections and media practice in general. It has a special focus on the electoral cycle with additional sections on reporting marginalized sectors, journalism ethics, and media safety.

ANFREL conducted several consultation meetings with journalists from the different parts of the country and their valuable inputs were greatly considered in the making of this toolkit with the combined experience of ANFREL as Asia's leading election observation group. ANFREL hopes this toolkit would be a useful guide for journalists covering elections to help them navigate the complexities of the process and empower them to become competent and responsible agents of truth.



2. Elections

2.1. History of Elections in Myanmar

Elections have been held in Burma since the British rule of the country. The legislative council elections were first held on 21 November 1922, and other elections were intermittently held in 1925, 1928, 1932, and 1936.

In January 1947, General Aung San went to London and demanded the country's independence from the British, and in April 1947, elections were held to form a constituent assembly. The Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) won 173 seats, the Karen Youth Organization (KYO) won 19 seats and the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) won seven seats.

The AFPFL had intended to appoint General Aung San as prime minister but he was assassinated in July 1947. In September 1947, the Constitutional Assembly approved the 'Constitution of the Union of Burma'. According to the constitution, the election-winning party (AFPFL) could form a government. U Nu then took office as prime minister.

Section 233 of the 1947 Constitution states: "The first general elections under this Constitution shall be held within 18 months from the date of the coming into operation of this Constitution". But with the civil war coming along with the independence, general elections were held three times between 1951 and January 1952.

The AFPFL won the 1956 elections. But the party was split into two groups: one, known as the "Clean" AFPFL, was led by U Nu and the other group, known as the "Stable" AFPFL, was led by U Kyaw Nyein and U Ba Swe. In 1958, as the politicians intensified their rivalry for political power, General Ne Win seized power and ruled the country as a caretaker government.

In 1960, the caretaker government held the general elections and "Stable" AFPFL won 41 seats and "Clean" AFPFL won 158 seats. On 2 March 1962, the Union Revolutionary Council led by General Ne Win seized power and it was the end of parliamentary democracy in Myanmar.

2. Elections

In 1973, a constitutional referendum was held, and under the terms of the approved constitution, a general election was held in January 1974. This was the beginning of the one-party state led by the Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP). General elections were held in 1978, 1981, and 1985, and only the BSPP could compete since other parties were not allowed.

In August and September 1988, the army crushed the nationwide protests known as the 8888 uprisings, and the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) seized power. In 1990, the National League for Democracy (NLD) won a landslide victory in the 492-seat parliament (392 seats out of 492 seats), but the SLORC refused to recognize the results and hand over the power, eventually imprisoning most of the elected politicians.

In 1992, General Saw Maung resigned as chairman of the SLORC, and was replaced by General Than Shwe. In 1993, the National Convention was started to be held in order to draft the new Constitution. In 1997 the SLORC was abolished and it was transformed into the State Peace and Development Council. In May 2008, a referendum was held and the new constitution was approved by the junta.

The NLD did not contest in the multi-party general elections held in November 2010 under the terms of the 2008 constitution. The Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) won the elections. The NLD took part in the 2012 by-elections and subsequently entered Parliament.

In the 2015 elections, the NLD won the majority of the constituencies and formed a government. By-elections were held in April 2017 and November 2018 to fill vacant seats.

In total, between 1922 and 2019, there were 16 general elections in Myanmar, three by-elections, two referendums, and three constitutions.

2.2. Myanmar Electoral System

Different countries have a variety of electoral systems. There are plurality or majority systems, proportional representation systems, and mixed systems. These depict different approaches to elections. Here, we will cover the electoral system of Myanmar under the 2008 Constitution.

Since 2010, elections have been held in Myanmar with a Plurality / Majority system. Most representative systems use either a winner-take-all system (First past the post - FPTP); Multi-Agent-Centered System (Block Vote - BV); Most Party-Centered System (Party Block Vote - PBV); Alternative Vote – AV; and the two-round system - TRS. Myanmar applies FPTP.

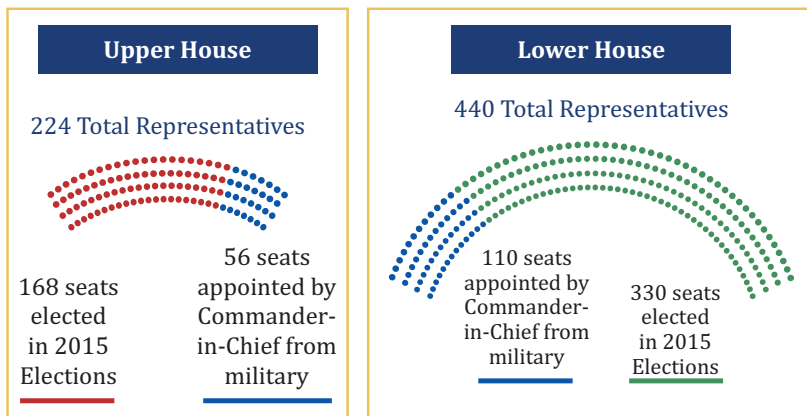
Voters are not directly electing the government but they are electing the parliamentarians. There are three types of parliaments in Myanmar that have legislative power: the *Amyotha Hluttaw*, the *Pyithu Hluttaw*, and the *Region & State Hluttaws*. Public have to elect those who will represent 3 parliaments in Myanmar. However, not all parliamentarians are selected by the public as there is a quota of 25% of seats in all houses nominated by the commander-in-chief of the military.

Amyotha Hluttaw

The upper house is composed of twelve representatives from each region and state. As there are 14 States and Regions, there are 168 elected members of the *Amyotha Hluttaw*, along with 56 representatives from the military. The *Amyotha Hluttaw* has a total of 224 representatives.

Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw representatives are elected from constituencies based on each township. As a result, 330 constituencies are elected across the whole country, and 110 military representatives from the military. The *Pyithu Hluttaw* has a total of 440 representatives.



Source: IFES Myanmar

State/Region Hluttaws

In each region and state, two parliamentarians are elected per township, in addition to one for each nationality including 0.1% or more of the national population. One third of that total is proposed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Defense Services and the State/Region Assembly is formed.

2.3. International Norms and Principles in Elections

In addition to promoting public debates, providing information to the public to make informed decisions and educating citizens, monitoring the integrity and the transparency of the electoral process is also one of the main roles that the media can play throughout the electoral process. To monitor the electoral process, journalists should also have sound knowledge of the principles and the norms which govern democratic elections.

A truly democratic electoral process is one that reflects the will of the people, is held in regular intervals under a free and fair environment, conducted in accordance with the rule of law, and without any undue influence such as violence, fraud and intimidation. Electoral participation is an important and basic human right. The entire electoral process should not limit citizen's participation by discriminating against any race, religion, political views, and socioeconomic status. This is much more relevant in diverse communities, such as Myanmar.

Universal principles and norms are the guidelines which are internationally accepted to promote genuine democratic elections. These norms evolved from protocols, declarations, treaties, and other international instruments that were placed in order to uphold democracy and human rights. These principles have been used to design democratic electoral processes and, as parameters to evaluate the electoral process around the world. Journalists can use them to evaluate electoral systems and electoral processes to assess the level of integrity.

2. Elections

The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**, a milestone document in the history of human rights, lays out the fundamental principles for elections in **Article 21**:

“(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives [...] (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedures.”

The **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966)** stipulates in **Article 25** that

“Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in Article 2 [race, colour, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status] and without unreasonable restrictions:

- a. To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;*
- b. To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors;*
- c. To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country.”*

Also, the ICCPR articulates the following principles connected to the elections:

- *Freedom of political association, i.e. to form and/or join political parties*
- *Freedom of peaceful assembly, i.e. to hold and participate in political events and rallies*
- *Freedom of movement, i.e. to travel without undue restriction to build electoral support*
- *Freedom of information, i.e. to seek, receive, and offer information to make informed choices*
- *Freedom of political expression, i.e. to articulate support for a choice without recrimination*
- *Freedom from coercion, i.e. to exercise political choice without intimidation or fear of retribution*

The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979)** contains provisions protecting the equal rights of women to participate in electoral affairs; similarly, the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2007)** ensures fundamental rights of persons with disabilities. The **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD, 1969)** commits the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of understanding among all races; while the **International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICPRMW, 1990)** emphasizes the connection between migration and human rights. These are some of the other international instruments laying out state obligation towards a more inclusive election system.

2. Elections

ANFREL has also initiated several documents which aims to create an endemic process of promoting democracy and electoral integrity. These documents were products of the Asian Electoral Stakeholders' Forums (AESF), which gather election management bodies and election monitoring organizations from all over Asia to promote democratic electoral processes. The products of the different AESF are as follows:

1. *The Bangkok Declaration on Free and Fair Elections (2012)* – a document which standardizes the norms and principles identified by Asian electoral stakeholders on what makes elections democratic;
2. *Dili Indicators of Democratic Elections (2015)* – iterates specific determinants of democratic elections, which election monitors can use a guide to assess the quality of elections;
3. *Bali Commitments: 8 Keys to Electoral Transparency and Integrity (2016)* – describes a set of eight criteria which can be used to assess the level of transparency and integrity of an election;
4. *Colombo Pledge on Promoting and Defending Democracy in Asia (2018)* – an action plan designed to be a guide among election stakeholders in addressing contemporary challenges to democratization.

CSO-led initiatives the media can learn from

CASE STUDY 1

The complexity and vastness of elections make it hard for the media to cover all of its aspects but there are a number of civil society-led initiatives during elections which the media can learn from and take inspiration in pursuing better election reporting.

Independent monitoring and audit of votes

In the Philippines, the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) sets out to independently count and monitor election results through its Operation Quick Count (OQC). NAMFREL deploys volunteers throughout the country who gather elections returns from each precinct in each municipality and city in the province. Reports from the field are received, verified, and consolidated in the National Tabulation Center before they are released to the public. (Operation Quick Count, <https://www.namfrel.com.ph/v2/activities/quickcount.php>)

NAMFREL's OQC is undertaken to prevent fraud, deter manipulation of results at the counting and canvassing stage by releasing accurate (unofficial) results, and enhance the acceptability of the results of the elections in the Philippines.

NAMFREL's project is one of the ways to empower and encourage citizen participation in elections by actively monitoring and safeguarding their votes.

Campaign finance monitoring

In Sri Lanka where there are no campaign finance regulations, the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) tracked campaign spending of candidates who contested in the 2019 Presidential Election to promote transparency and accountability in election campaign financing and create an awareness on the impact of unlimited and unregulated spending. (CMEV estimates Rs. 1 b spent on publicity by two main candidates, <http://www.ft.lk/news/CMEV-estimates-Rs-1-b-spent-on-publicity-by-two-main-candidates/56-689070>)

CMEV, prior to Election Day, estimated that campaign-related expenses of all the candidates will reach Rs. 5.5 billion. While the costs were only estimates, they were based on publicly available information on print and online ads including on social media, and other costs involving ground level campaigning and costs related to state property misuse.

Aside from the lack of mechanism for transparency in campaign financing, the CMEV monitoring was also challenged with the difficulty of gathering official data on campaign-related activities, data analysis was limited to official expenditures only, and the source of funds spent remain unknown.

CMEV's initiative to monitor campaign financing in an environment that does not have mechanisms for transparency for such an important election component displays diligence in researching and employing creative ways to present critical information to the public.

Fact-checking

In Indonesia, the *Masyarakat Anti Fitnah Indonesia* (MAFINDO, Indonesia Anti-Slander Society) is an anti-hoax CSO. Mafindo began as an online grassroots movement in 2015 and was founded as an organization in 2016 which has led crowdsourced hoax busting initiatives and digital literacy education campaigns. (<https://www.mafindo.or.id/>)

MAFINDO has also launched tools and apps for people to report malicious false information, check suspected disinformation online, and has also helped empower other fact-checking initiatives like the collaborative fact-checking project cekfakta.com. (<https://turnbackhoax.id/layanan-publik/>)

Fact-checking initiatives that involve the public promote in the society a culture that counters the undermining of democratic elections by fostering a deep appreciation of facts.

This is what media scholars Bill Kovach and Tom Rosentiel said in the book “The Elements of Journalism” which they said has remained constant in the midst of the changing face of journalism. Further, they said “... the purpose of journalism is not defined by technology, not by journalists or the techniques they employ ... the principles and purpose of journalism are defined by something more basic: the function news plays in the lives of people.”

Like during elections, the critical function of the press is to provide information that people can use to help them make informed decisions. But to better understand the role the media plays during elections entails an appreciation of how elections work and what elections mean in the overall scheme of things.

An election is the expression and assertion of fundamental human rights. It is a process in which the rights to express, associate, and assemble, as well as the right to access information, are all exercised. Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantees the people’s right to vote as “free expression of the will of the electors.” It also sets standards on genuine elections which should be “universal and equal suffrage” and “held by secret ballot.”

Elections are conducted under legal frameworks that set rules and regulations. These cover the pre-election period (voter registration, civic education, planning, budgeting), election period (nomination, campaign, voting, tabulation, announcement of results), and post-election period (audits, electoral reforms).

In an ideal situation, given that the media has fulfilled its role, among others, people will be equipped with enough information to select the leaders that best represent their ideals and aspirations and elect those who are best able to fulfill them. The true will of the people in a democratic election is reflected through a fully informed electorate.

Media as Source of Legitimate Information

There are many aspects of elections that the media can focus on. For one, they can provide information on the electoral process: voter registration, voting process, vote counting and results announcement. This is basic information that should be given in any election for the media to cover. Part of the process are campaigns where candidates and political parties present their platforms of governance. A common criticism in the media's coverage of elections is how candidates are often presented as personalities and campaign promises are presented plainly as they are stated by those who make them.

As promises made by politicians still form the basis of the electorate in their selection of who to vote for, it is the media's job to present them in a critical manner: scrutinize the soundness of the promised policies and evaluate the capability of those making them.

There are instances where the electorate are shortchanged when politicians make grandiose promises that they are not able to keep upfront. Not to mention, post-election, it is the media's job to track whether or not such campaign promises are fulfilled and which the media can make a comprehensive report on the evaluation of the performance of the ruling party contesting for a fresh mandate.

The media are not mouthpieces which merely echo what the speaker says and it would be of a disservice if the media are allowed to be freely used as platforms for campaigning than critical filters of truths from lies. Also during elections, disinformation online would be more rampant than ever, and the media could act as fact-checkers. The deeply embedded practice of verification and corroboration as well as the tedious editorial process of the media put them in a position where they can act as reliable sources of truthful information amid the sea of malicious information trying to sway voters towards a certain direction.

Elections are also opportunities to amplify the voices of those who are often less heard and the issues that concern them. Elections, above all, are about the people. Many voices would make efforts to make themselves heard but it is the media's job to sort through the noise and help amplify those whose concerns are often neglected yet essential to be noticed and addressed especially during elections.

It is part of the agenda setting function of the media to refocus the discourse during elections on issues that concern the citizens that's why it's not enough to just provide information about the process. Election reporting entails more than that.

Media as Watchdogs

Another role of the media which is heightened during election is its watchdog function: the media acting as a monitor of power against abuses and wrongdoings, holding the abusers into account.

There are processes and procedures that should be followed and any misdeeds would compromise the legitimacy of elections. The media should take a closer and sharper look at possibilities of electoral fraud both by state and/or non-state actors which could include active monitoring of vote counting, instances of vote buying and vote rigging, as well as indirect acts that can unduly influence the voters.

There are many instances the media can look into: use of state resources for campaigns, campaign finance, and any other violations of the rules and regulations as to level the playing field for all those contesting for public office and help curb corruption.

Media and Civic Education

The media can also act as agents to further civic education among the citizens: providing timely updates about the election is one thing but helping develop a citizenry that uses information to proactively participate in political affairs and uphold their civic duty is another.

Voting is one way for citizens to fulfill their civic duties but protecting that vote is essential for a more involved citizenry. It takes more than selecting a leader to fully participate in nation-building: people should be empowered to know that they have rights and that they could and should assert those rights. The people could suggest policies they deem necessary and protest those that would curtail their rights. They can evaluate how they are being governed and demand changes. They could also act as monitors of power against abuses and corruption which in turn could demand to hold erring officials to account.

One initiative in which the media has taken to promote civic empowerment is through crowd-sourcing. In the Philippines, one of the largest television networks launches during elections a crowd-sourcing initiative to monitor the people's votes. They encourage ordinary citizens to share photos or videos of candidates who violate campaign rules and regulations, among others. Post-election, they transform the initiative into a citizen monitor of government projects being implemented, erring public officials, among many other things.

While there should be mechanisms for the people to report wrongdoings and redress for grievances, initiatives like that are a good start to reinforce the notion that people can be monitors of power and that they have the right to get involved in how they are being governed.

MEDIA'S ROLES DURING ELECTIONS



Media as sources of legitimate information

- Source of information about the electoral process and campaign promises
- Filter of truth from lies, fact-checkers
- Scrutinize soundness of campaign promises and qualifications of candidates
- Amplify voices especially of those underreported, marginalized

Media as watchdogs

- Monitor of power against abuses and wrongdoings
- Investigate on possible of electoral fraud including cases of vote buying and vote rigging, among others

Media and civic education

- Empower citizens to actively participate in the political affairs of the country by:
- Suggesting necessary policies or protest against those that curtail rights
 - Evaluating how they are governed and demanding changes
 - Monitoring of power and demanding accountability against erring public officials

There are many other areas in which the media can be of service to the people especially during elections but when in doubt, Kovach and Rosentiel's elements of journalism can help as a general guide:

1. Journalism's first obligation is to the truth.
2. Its first loyalty is to citizens.
3. Its essence is a discipline of verification.
4. Its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover.
5. It must serve as an independent monitor of power.
6. It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise.
7. It must strike to make the significant interesting and relevant.
8. It must keep the news comprehensive and in proportion.
9. Its practitioners have an obligation to exercise their personal conscience.
10. Citizens, too, have rights and responsibilities when it comes to the news.

Taking special note that truth is an essential compass that guides one's direction where the media serves as independent monitor of power towards the common good of the people.



4. Reporting Elections

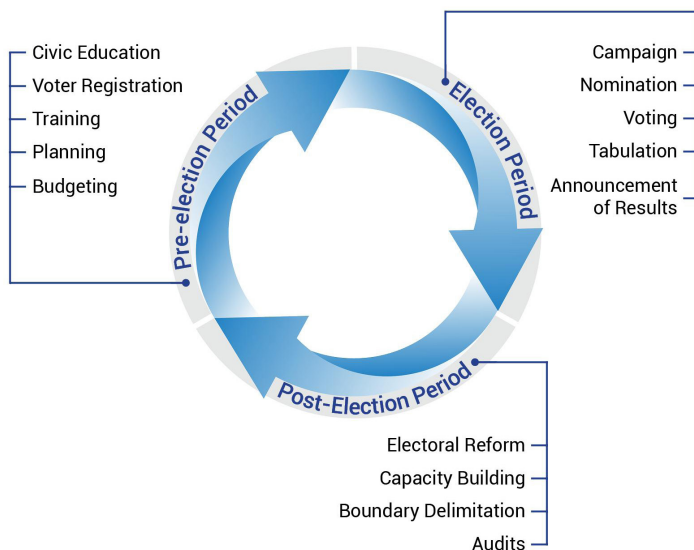
4.1. Reporting through Election Cycle

The election is not a single activity that starts with polling and finishes after the announcement of the results. It is a continuous process of overlapping activities involved with many different stakeholders interacting and influencing each other. Also, there is no fine line between when it starts or ends. It goes as a cycle as elections periodically

4. Reporting Elections

continue. Each activity of the cycle is highly interdependent and failure of one activity can negatively affect the integrity of the whole electoral process. (i.e. Errors in voter list or disenfranchisement of some sectors of the society can affect the entire process of the elections)

When it comes to the media engagement in the electoral process, it is important for journalists to report about the entire electoral process throughout its cycle. In general practice, many media organizations only focus on the election day or period after the announcement of the elections. It is necessary to focus on the pre- and post-election period as well, as each and every part and activity of the whole process affects the integrity of the elections. (i.e: Media can support the efforts of civil society to advocate for better election laws through reviewing the laws in pre- and post-election period and also review the performance of the elected members of the legislature during the post-election period)



Above diagram consists of many of the activities that different election stakeholders involved in the pre-, during and the post-election periods.



Journalists should also engage with other electoral stakeholders such as Election Management Bodies in the union, state/regional, also district and township levels; civil society organizations engaged in elections such as election observer groups; political parties; and others that will help provide information on developments related to the electoral process and also verify the information received from different stakeholders.

Journalists need to be well aware of the election rules and procedures in order to understand the violations of election laws by any stakeholder and irregularities in the electoral process. The media should report fairly about the political parties and their campaigning during the electoral period. Also, the media can support the election commission on their voter education efforts to communicate the voting processes to the general public. The information could be made available in different languages.

Reliable and responsible media organizations and media practitioners are needed to play the role of a watchdog against corruption and irregularities of the electoral process. It is the role of the media to report problems and possible violations of the rules, as well as to inform voters about the issues and the political parties and candidates' policies.

These are some of the most important areas that the media should be aware of and report on in the pre-, during and post-election periods. As mentioned above, some of the processes do not fall into one particular period which continues across the different phases of the cycle:

Pre-election Period

- **Assess the electoral system and the law**

This provides the legal framework and system on how to conduct the elections; basically the rules of the game. In assessing laws, it is also important to contextualize how they were formed, whether they meet the international democratic principles and how they affect the overall quality of the elections. Also, the media can report on citizen's opinions on the current system from different segments of the society. Reports and recommendations in past elections from election observers, the government, political parties and media can be used in order to assess the election system and the law.

Following are the main laws that journalists should be aware of and refer to when it comes to reporting and assessing the legal framework of elections in Myanmar:

- 2008 Myanmar Constitution
- The Amyotha Hluttaw Election Law
- The Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law
- The Region Hluttaw or State Hluttaw Election Law
- The Union Election Commission Law

What to watch:

- a. Does the legal framework ensure an inclusive and competitive election process?
- b. Is the legal framework complete, and understood by all stakeholders?
- c. Were there any late changes to the legal framework? Did this create concern or confusion?
- d. Does the electoral system, including boundary delimitation, provide for equal suffrage? Are there sectors that are excluded from the process?

- **Election Management Bodies and Election Administration**

The work of the EMB should be collegial, nonpartisan, transparent, and independent of the authorities and other political influences. In addition, the administrative structure needs broad public support if it is to be viewed as credible. Possible guide questions for assessment:

What to watch:

- a. Who are the members of the election commission? What is the background of each member prior to their appointment? Do they have connections with parties, controversial personalities and interest groups?
- b. Are vulnerable sectors represented? Ie: Women? Ethnic groups?
- c. What are the governing rules on appointing election commissioners? Are they transparent?
- d. Has the body been fair in implementing election rules and regulations in all different levels such as the union, region/ state, township levels? Do they favor a certain party?
- e. How well do they communicate with the other electoral stakeholders? What degree of trust do they enjoy?

- **Constituency Delimitation**

Fair constituency delimitation procedures will consider a range of information, including available demographic information, territorial integrity, geographical distribution, topography, etc. Further, polling stations should be distributed to guarantee equal access within each constituency.

What to watch:

- a. Reasonability and level of acceptance of the constituency structure (through public consultation)
- b. Availability of information about constituencies and lower level districts (demarcation, size, number of seats)
- c. Fairness and effectiveness of rules for constituency boundary delimitation and seat allocation and whether rules are, in fact, being followed

- **Voter Awareness**

This is one of the areas that the media can play a significant role that assesses the level of the voter awareness throughout the country or territory and informs the stakeholders and the public about the areas where there is a lack of voter education. The media can play an active role in educating voters as they have the ability to reach large audiences and engage with different communities in society. The media operating in ethnic languages can reach more ethnic communities.

Voter education should encourage participation by all, including members of ethnic groups, women, and other marginalized sectors. Awareness campaigns should extend throughout the territory of the country, including rural and outlying areas. The public should be well

informed as to where, when, and how to vote. The public should also be educated as to why voting is important.

What to watch:

- a. Design and distribution of UEC (information/education/communication) materials and the degree of their simplicity and clarity
- b. Percentage of first-time voters exposed to voter education to facilitate their active participation
- c. Whether the voter awareness reached to the historically marginalized groups

• Voter Registration

A comprehensive and inclusive voter registration process is key to ensure universal suffrage and the enjoyment of the fundamental right to vote and to be elected. Media should assess whether the different parts of the society have been registered in the voter roll, including the marginalized sectors such as IDPs, ethnic communities, and others.

What to watch:

- a. Proportion of voting age population and actual registered to voters
- b. In terms of voting age population, percentage of those eligible to vote for the first time in the election and extent to which they have actually registered to vote
- c. Whether voter registrars reflect any bias based on gender, age, ethnicity or religious or regional affiliation
- d. Ability of qualified people to register with a minimum of inconvenience

What to watch:

- e. Presence of appropriate mechanisms to ensure that the voter list is accurate
- f. Whether the voter lists are being displayed and the number of times they have to be displayed according to the legal framework and whether they have been displayed in places accessible to the people

- **Political party engagement and candidate registration**

Media should meet with various political parties and candidates to report about their views on elections and also report on their policies and election manifestos in an independent and balanced manner.

There can be few political parties contesting nationwide or even a large number of political parties contesting the elections in different areas of the country. Some parties such as ethnic parties will not have candidates in every part of the country. There will be independent candidates too. Media should be able to provide voters with equitable information about the parties contesting in the election.

It is also important to review whether or not candidates and parties have been properly allowed to participate in the electoral process.

What to watch:

- a. Do they have any comments or difficulties regarding the candidates registration process?
- b. Which policies are they prioritizing? Do these campaign promises address the interests of marginalized sectors?
- c. Can all political parties campaign freely? Do any of them experience any intimidation? Threats? Other interference to their campaigns?
- d. Any misuse of public resources? Are state resources being used for the benefit of any political party?
- e. Ability of parties and candidates who meet registration requirements to complete registration on a non-discriminatory basis?
- f. Whether or not the political parties are violating the code of conduct (COC) for political parties or any electoral laws and guidelines?

Election Day

- **Advance Voting**

Advance voting should be given the same amount of attention as the actual election day. Procedures should be designed to encourage the broadest possible participation, without compromising electoral security. Voters with special needs (such as PWDs, elderly, students, conscripts, workers, foreign service personnel, and prisoners who have retained voting rights) should be accommodated. Media should also inform the people about the advance voting procedures, who can vote, where they are taking place and the advance voting period.

What to watch:

- a. What are the guidelines that govern the holding of the advance voting in both inside and outside constituency? Who are eligible to vote in advance?
- b. How can the UEC ensure that the advance voters cannot vote again on election day?
- c. What is the procedure for advance voting? How long is advance voting being held? Where should advance voters go to vote? Are they secure?
- d. How do they secure the ballots after the voting?
- e. How are the ballots counted? How are they tabulated?

• Election Day

Election day is one of the most important days in the whole electoral process. Media should have more coverage on the ground on election day and early preparation and planning are crucial.

The media should be aware of guidelines on media coverage of the election from the UEC to identify which areas can be covered and what limitations are set, among others. It must be noted that media organizations and journalists are required to apply for special permits from the UEC and its sub commissions in advance to be able to cover election day.

During the early preparations, the media can also identify the possible hotspots such areas that have historically bad records in previous elections, low voter turnout or any other places where irregularities or violence can happen due to campaigning trends or high competition among political parties.

What to watch:

- a. Whether or not any party is campaigning the day before the election day, during the cooling period
- b. Surveying the area for signs of campaign materials or campaign activity in, on, or around the polling station on election day
- c. Intimidation or disturbance on the voting process
- d. Incidents of voters being offered any inducements to vote in a particular manner (vote buying)
- e. Ability of PWD voters to access the polling station
- f. Voting process in military polling stations
- g. Dispatch of ballots and other voting materials and their security for the period prior to election day
- h. Sufficiency of ballots and other polling materials initially received
- i. Total number of voters on the voter list for the polling station and the number of votes casted throughout the day to determine the turnout trends
- j. Any incidents of disturbances, irregularities, or complaints occurring and the redress procedures
- k. Whether or not unauthorized persons are in restricted areas
- l. Whether or not there is overcrowding at the polling station
- m. Incidents of voters being turned away because their names did not appear on the voter list
- n. Whether or not there is adequate secrecy provided for marking ballots
- o. Determination of the fairness and impartiality of the count
- p. Technical shortcomings and serious/deliberate irregularities
- q. Integrity and accuracy of counting
- r. Transparency of tabulation
- s. Availability of results to interested members of the public
- t. Process of the announcement of results in polling station, township and regional levels

Post Election Period

Post-election period can be a particularly sensitive time for political parties and candidates, as well as for voters especially when there is high competition among different political parties or two main parties. Media should monitor and report on incidents of election-related human rights violations, such as post-election harassment, intimidation or violence, as well as any arrests or detentions related to the election. Also, the media need to be alert on the possibility that political parties or other stakeholders may organize protests or demonstrations in the days following the announcement of results.

What to watch:

- a. Are there any instances of violence after the elections?
- b. How do the voters see the results? Are they acceptable to them?
- c. How is the election management body managing the counting and tabulation?
- d. How are they going to proceed with the Election Dispute Resolution process? What complaints do they have?
- e. What initiatives do civil society have after the elections? What are the most significant issues they saw during the entire process?
- f. What reform initiatives are the stakeholders going to prioritize?

In the post election period, the media also have a responsibility to report on the performance of the government and also representatives elected to the legislative bodies. People have the right to know what their representatives do in the parliament and what kind of engagement that they do during the legislative process. Also, journalists should continue reporting on the instances of such corruption and abuse of power by the elected representatives.

■ 4.2. Reporting Marginalized Sectors

It is also important for marginalized groups to be involved in the electoral process. There are religious minorities, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities (PWDs), women, LGBTIQ+ and the youth. Good journalists should be careful about their rights in the electoral process.

- What are the barriers to their participation in the electoral process?
- What are some ways they can participate in the electoral process?
- Have they received their rights in recent elections? From there, how did the electoral administrators learn from the lesson and prepare for it?
- What are the preparations for PWDs to register and what mechanism are in place for them to vote with ease on Election day?
- What are the arrangements for the voters to arrive at polling stations in a timely manner?

4. Reporting Elections

These are the questions that need to be asked. It is important to note that everyone in the electoral process has equal rights. The efforts are needed to point out and to determine whether the election laws are carefully studied to uphold and protect their rights. If they should have specific rights, they should also be mentioned. We have to ask whether they are being offered proportional representation for them, provision of a separate constituency, are there any opportunities such as making ballots with local language? If not, ask what laws will protect their rights. Many different ethnic groups are living in Myanmar, and not everyone speaks in Burmese. There are also ethnic nationalities who speak their mother tongue. If the language of the ballot is not the one they understand, they might not have the right to choose the representative they really intended to.

In some places, they are discriminated against because of their religious affiliation. Or they may have barriers to vote among majorities because of having a different ethnicity despite living in the same place. It is even riskier for candidates to choose to represent them.

Is there enough electoral education and electoral information on how to get the right to vote? Do they understand the electoral system and its pros and cons? Most ethnic minorities are often neglected and excluded from the electoral process and journalists would do well not to forget that they are part and parcel of the electoral process. Journalists can provide information on how election officials can assist ethnic minorities in far-flung areas.

To evaluate whether or not marginalized groups are equally involved in the electoral process, here are some questions to consider:

- What are the main obstacles to the election participation of marginalized groups?
- What kind of good management will be needed?
- Who can help encourage marginalized groups to participate in the elections?
- What have election management bodies done to encourage participation of the marginalized sector to the election?

In the upcoming 2020 elections, parliamentary elections have been discussed in the parliament on transferring the polling booths off military bases. It will be interesting to see what will happen with the expectations of the members of the military family and the general public's view of them.

Tips on Reporting Marginalized Sectors

PWDs

- Seek permission from individuals before disclosing their disability.
- Emphasize abilities not limitations.
- Describe PWDs with **“People First Language”** on reporting. People’s first language emphasizes the person first not the disability. For example, when referring to a person with a disability, refer to the person first by using phrases such as: “a person who ...”, “a person with ...” or, “person who has...”

PWDs

- Use the appropriate and right terminologies of PWDs.
- Portray PWDs in a balanced and neutral way just like persons without disability, not a hero or superhuman.
- Create balanced natural human-interest stories instead of tear-jerking stories.
- Remember that disability is not an illness and PWDs are not patients.
- Include accessibility measures in your preparation: accessible venue for PWDs to be interviewed, sign language interpreter, personal assistance, etc.
- When taking photos or videos of PWDs, the angle should be person-focused and not on their impairment or disability, or their assistive device. Be patient with their responses and avoid talking directly to an assistant accompanying them. Make eye to eye contact with PWD especially for those who use wheelchairs and those who are visually impaired. When talking to hearing impaired persons, avoid shouting as it is not necessary.
- Make sure that PWDs have appropriate appearance when taking photos and videos and use the photos and video which are enlightening their dignity.
- Encourage to use and describe PWDs with social model and human rights based model of disability, avoid using charity and medical model of disability.
- Develop and disseminate news and reports with accessible format as much as possible (with sign language, captioning/subtitles, audio, large print, Braille if possible, etc.)

LGBTIQ+

- Use the appropriate and right terminologies of LGBTIQ+
- Use their preferred name as a priority rather than the birth name especially for transgenders.
- Avoid focusing on medical issues.
- A person's sexual orientation or gender identity status should only be mentioned if relevant to the story
- Portray LGBTIQ+ as a balanced and neutral way just like others people

Women, Ethnic & Indigenous People

- Encourage and recognize the importance of parity in women's participation in political processes to offer fair and balanced coverage of all candidates.
- Do not portray the women candidates regarding their appearance and look.
- Avoid gender stereotyping in reporting.
- Do not present women candidates as victims or sexual objects.
- Exercise factual and accurate reporting on ethnic and indigenous people
- Know the local context and portray with "Do Know Harm" concept on reporting ethnic and indigenous people

4.3. Tips for Young Journalists

It can get pretty overwhelming for newbie journalists covering important events like elections as any mistakes, hints of partisanship, and lack of understanding of the process could undermine the legitimacy of elections.

4. Reporting Elections

Young journalists would do well to prepare and appreciate that the role the media plays during elections is crucial for citizens to make informed decisions. But above anything else, the adherence to the ethical practice of journalism is important as it will help guide young journalists sift through the cacophony of different noises that want the attention of the media.

Here are some tips for budding journalists covering elections:

Know your ABCs

Elections are held under legal frameworks that set rules and regulations. The familiarity with elections and other related laws is important to better monitor the process, identify shortcomings, and capture mistakes and abuses. Read up on the laws that govern elections and issuances from the election commission. Guidelines for journalists covering elections are sometimes issued so it is best to take note of these as well. It could also help to talk to various electoral stakeholders like election monitoring groups who have experience evaluating the process. They could provide leads and helpful tips on aspects of the election that the media may need to focus on.

Accuracy, accuracy, accuracy!

Always get your facts straight. Journalism is a practice of verification and corroboration. There will be many attempts to put out lies for or against candidates and political parties.

Expect that disinformation would be widespread and if media outlets have long established themselves as reliable sources of information, then the people will look to them as countervailing forces against those peddling lies. As a new journalist, it is your duty to protect and uphold that reputation.

Diversify your sources

While at the front and center of elections are candidates vying for a mandate from the electorate, it is best to avoid just focusing on them. There are many electoral stakeholders involved in the process and oftentimes, their voices are not heard. It is the media's job to help amplify those voices.

Civil society organizations will be able to offer insights into issues and concerns of citizens especially those belonging to the marginalized sector.

No story is worth dying for

Threats to and attacks against journalists increase during elections as accusations of bias are always present, among many other things. Know that your safety and security is important and anything that compromises those in pursuit of a story is not worth the try.

Be mindful of the security measures of your media organization. Always coordinate your whereabouts to the newsdesk if pursuing a risky lead and immediately report any direct or indirect threat to your safety. If there are no safety mechanisms in place, discuss with your news organizations the best practices in keeping journalists safe and procedures to follow if and when threats arise.

When in doubt, consult your editors

Editors are your mentors and they will help stir you in the right direction. While journalists in the field are left to decide on their own, the constant communication and coordination with the news desk is important. There will be scenarios where any training or guidebooks may not be able to cover but your editors, with their years in practice and experience, will know how to respond accordingly.

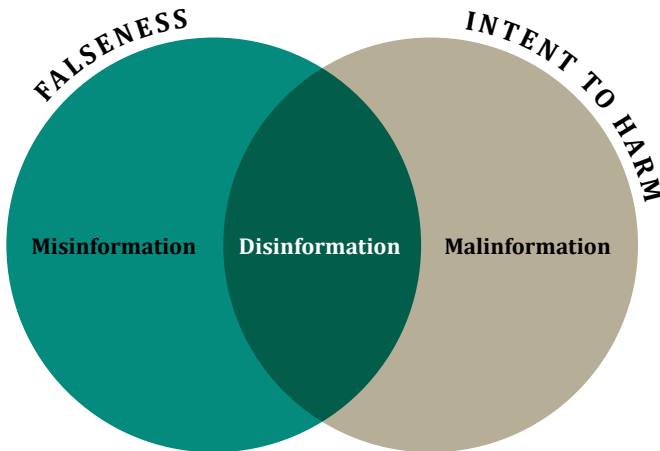
4.4. Fact-checking Methodologies

Fact-checking is not a new form of journalism. Getting one's facts straight and the practice of verification and corroboration are deeply embedded in journalism as truth-telling is one of the principles of ethical journalism.

The Truth-O-Meter of *PolitiFact* in the US is one of the first fact-checking initiatives around the world having been founded in 2007. "PolitiFact helped inspire a fact-checking movement around the world and pioneered a new way of tracking campaign promises."

Misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation, or as they are clustered as types of information disorder, are not new, as well. They have been around for a long time.

Information Disorder



They are defined as follows:

- *Disinformation* is “content that is intentionally false and designed to cause harm. It is motivated by three distinct factors: to make money; to have political influence, either foreign or domestic; or to cause trouble for the sake of it.”
- *Misinformation* “also describes false content but the person sharing doesn’t realize that it is false or misleading. Often a piece of disinformation is picked by someone who doesn’t realize it’s false, and shares it with their networks, believing that they are helping.”
- *Malinformation* “is genuine information that is shared with an intent to cause harm.”

The changing information landscape, however, with the rampant spread of what has been tagged as “fake news” in the digital age has made fact-checking an essential component to uphold and protect the truth.

There are seven types of mis- and disinformation, identified from low harm to high harm, which the media can look into:

- Satire or parody: No intention to cause harm but has potential to fool.
- False connection: When headlines, visuals or captions don’t support the content.
- Misleading content: Misleading use of information to frame an issue or individual.
- False context: When genuine content is shared with false contextual information.

4. Reporting Elections

- Imposter content: When genuine sources are impersonated.
- Manipulated content: When genuine information or imagery is manipulated to deceive.
- Fabricated content: New content that is 100% false, designed to deceive and do harm.

The last four are considered to cause high harm and these are the ones most rampant nowadays.

First Draft, a global non-profit that supports journalists, academics and technologists working to address challenges relating to trust and truth in the digital age, developed a toolkit for newsrooms that would want to take on fact-checking. It has guides on online newsgathering, verifying online information, and responsible reporting. (<https://start.me/p/vjv80b/first-draft-basic-toolkit>)

Here are some of the useful tools to verify content online:

	Tools	Description
Verifying Images	TinyEye (https://tineye.com/)	TinyEye is a reverse image search tool online where users can upload a photo or search through a URL then the tool looks for similar images online.
	Google Images Search (https://www.google.com/imghp?hl=en)	Functions like TinyEye, Google Images Search is the tech giant's reverse image search tool.

	Tools	Description
Verifying Videos	Youtube DataViewer (https://citizenevidence.amnestyusa.org/)	Amnesty International developed a tool that extracts hidden data from videos hosted on Youtube. It extracts the exact upload time of the video and thumbnails for image reverse search.
	InVID WeVerify extension (https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/fake-news-debunker-by-inv/mhc-cpoafgdgbhjnfhkcmgkn-ndkeenfhe?hl=en)	A Google Chrome extension designed to help journalists, fact-checkers and human rights defenders to be more efficient in verifying videos and images online.
Verifying Websites	Whois (https://www.whois.com/)	Verify publicly available data on websites including website owner, contact details, location, registration date, and many others.
	Wayback Machine (https://archive.org/web/)	Repository of archived versions of webpages.

Other resources

- The Global Investigative Journalism Network has put together a list of resources on fact-checking and verification. (<https://gijn.org/fact-checking-verification/>)
- The Verification Handbook is a resource for journalists and aid responders, which provides step-by-step guidelines for using user-generated content during emergencies (<https://verificationhandbook.com/>) and for investigative reporting (<https://verificationhandbook.com/book2/chapter1.php>).
- The International Fact-Checking Network brings together fact-checkers worldwide which believes that “nonpartisan and transparent fact-checking can be a powerful instrument of accountability journalism.” They are guided by their code of principles which “is a series of commitments organizations abide by to promote excellence in fact-checking.” (<https://ifncodeofprinciples.poynter.org/>)

Sources:

Wardle, Claire. Understanding Information Disorder. October 2019.

First Draft (<https://firstdraftnews.org/>)

“Behind the unlikely success of PolitiFact and the Truth-O-Meter,” 21 August 2017, https://www.cjr.org/first_person/politifact-fact-checking-anniversary.php

**Alternative to covering elections:
Project ELECT in Thailand**

CASE STUDY 2

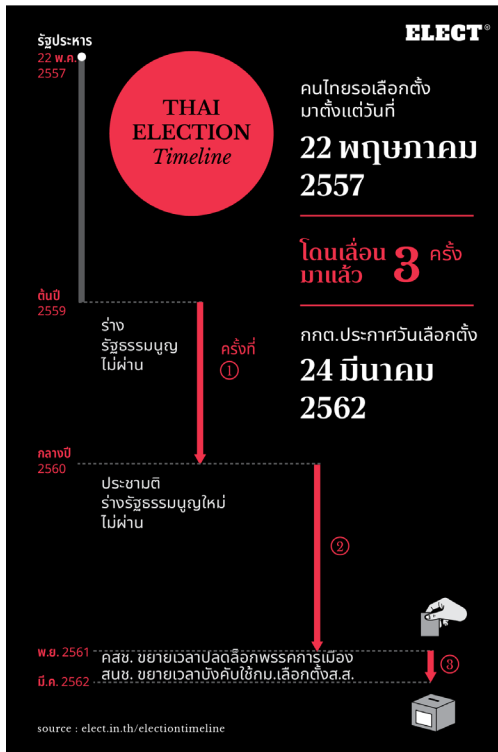
In 2019, it took about eight years before the people of Thailand were able to exercise their right to vote again. Prior to the May 2014 coup d'état, Thailand last held an election in 2011.

Despite the restrictions to freedom of expression and press freedom in Thailand, the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) observed during the 2019 Thai General Election that the media and civil society tried their best to guide the public and provide the information on how to meaningfully participate in the electoral process.

One of those efforts is the Project ELECT (Elect.in.th) where a group of media, technologists, and civil society collaborated and explored new methods of presenting political information through data visualization, interactive content, gamification, and other tools. The project aimed to spark interest and encourage political participation among the people, especially the youth.

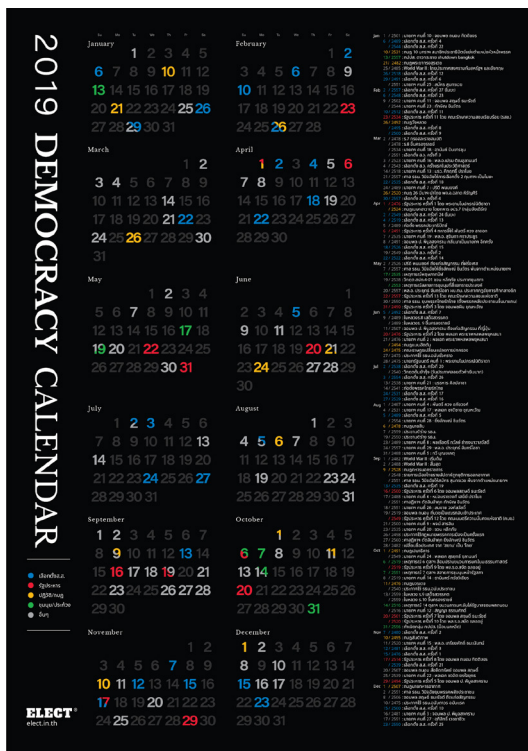
Launched late 2018 in time for the 2019 Thai General Election, Project ELECT provided information on the election, candidates, and history of democracy in Thailand, among other through new, interesting, and innovative ways. Below are some of the notable online tools and apps they deployed:

Information about the elections



Two interactive timelines on the Thai election—key events since the May 2014 coup including election postponements before it finally commenced in March 2019 (<https://elect.in.th/election-timeline/>) and the evolution of ballots used in previous Thai elections to present (<https://elect.in.th/ballot-timeline/>) – were produced. An online quiz was also available to test the voters’ knowledge about the Thai elections (<https://elect.in.th/election-101/>).

Democracy



Project ELECT also provided voters with context on the democracy in Thailand through an interactive Democracy Calendar which features key events that relate to elections and democracy in the country throughout the year (<https://elect.in.th/democracy-calendar/>).

They also developed a card game which tests the knowledge of voters about the history of Thai democracy (<https://elect.in.th/game-timeline/>). The game features cards bearing significant events in Thai politics which users will arrange one by one in a chronological order. Users get a point for each correct answer but three wrong attempts and the game is over.



5. Media Ethics and Guidelines

The US-based Poynter Institute put together what it called the Pyramid of Journalism Competence, which was first introduced in a conference in 1998 as part of a series of discussions on redefining and figuring out the purpose of journalism in contemporary times. Comprising 10 blocks, the pyramid tried to define the building

blocks that form a competent journalist. The foundations were composed of skill sets but at its apex was ethics. This was later updated to mission and purpose to encompass the understanding of the profession and the media's role in society. (The Pyramid of Journalism Competence: what journalists need to know, <https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2014/the-pyramid-of-journalism-competence-what-journalists-need-to-know/>)

The ethical practice of journalism is given the premium of being equivalent to competent journalism where skills are rendered useless unless the profession is conducted in a manner that respects and upholds ethical principles that guide one's reporting.

Adherence to ethics is the recognition that freedoms are not absolute and that there are corresponding responsibilities. Journalism ethics is defined as "the principles of behavior appropriate to journalism practice."

There are many efforts to codify journalism ethics around the world and these range from general principles to clearly defined guidelines with examples on what to do in certain circumstances. There are also news outlets which put together their own codes of ethics while others subscribe to a code discussed and agreed upon by media organizations as a unifying statement of the community.

Principles of Ethical Journalism

While no one code is above the other, these codes of ethics often reflect the five guiding principles for the ethical conduct in journalism as defined by media scholar Edmund Lambeth in his book "Committed Journalism: An Ethic for the Profession." According to Lambeth, the principles are:

5. Journalism Ethics

1. Truth-telling
2. Justice
3. Freedom
4. Humaneness
5. Stewardship

These ethical principles are echoed by professional standards which journalists are encouraged to observe in their everyday reporting.

For example, *truth-telling* reflects the journalist's responsibility to report only factual information which involves the practice of verification as well as providing proper context to the presentation of facts.

Corroboration is also important to check the soundness of the data gathered especially for sensitive issues that need careful handling of information.

This also involves honesty in gathering, processing, and delivering of information. A journalist must clearly present oneself as a member of the media to news subjects and sources when gathering information and make explicit that the information being gathered will be used for reporting. This is the reason why doing undercover is often discouraged as any misrepresentation of oneself is perceived as deceptive that compromises the information being gathered, not to mention in most instances, it could be illegal.

At the same time, there should be transparency on the manner of how data were gathered. For example, if an interview were conducted over the phone, this needs to be disclosed in the report or if a journalist tried to get the side of another subject in the report but failed to do so after several attempts, this could also be disclosed in the report as well.

Finally, disclosure of potential conflicts of interest should also be included in the report. This is often observed with news outlets that belong in conglomerates. For example, if a report involves a telecommunications company owned by the same owners of the media organization, then it is imperative to disclose such connection in the report.

The second principle is *justice* or fairness which involves getting all sides of the story.

There are different sides to a story, sometimes, there is just one, but it is important to report on all possible sides of the story for balance and present these in a way that does not put undue favor to either side of the story.

If a candidate, for example, accuses an opposing candidate of being corrupt, it is the duty of the reporter to get the side of the other candidate. To avoid a he-said, she-said scenario, the report should also include independent research of public records that could prove or disprove such accusation.

The presentation of facts also reflects the fairness, or lack of, in the story. If for the same example above the reporter chose to go on reporting about the accusation of one candidate only to bury the denial of the one being accused, then it is already being biased towards the other even if the denial was still reported in the story.

The third principle is *freedom* or autonomy of journalists and their independence from pressures that may influence how they report on issues. Certain codes of ethics would go into detail about not accepting gifts, bribes, or any other favors from news sources and subjects so as not to taint or influence their reporting. At large, media ownership and government censors also affect a journalist's independence.

5. Journalism Ethics

As discussed earlier, big media companies are usually part of conglomerates where business owners have a wide variety of business interests that at some point would be unavoidable not to touch into.

Disclosure of such potential conflicts of interests is important but that media owners must also ensure that editorial independence is guaranteed.

The same with undue government regulations, and other threats to and attacks against journalists that have a chilling effect on journalists and media outlets that they end up being less critical with their reporting, if at all critical. This impedes the independence and quality of the information that the people get from the media.

The fourth principle is *humaneness* which tackles the journalist's responsibility to do no further harm and the recognition that news is above all about human beings.

There are many aspects of reporting that require careful consideration of the conditions of subjects and sources. Private individuals have a right to be respected of their privacy unless issues that involve them are of utmost public interest. Certain information and details should not be disclosed to protect minors, especially those who were victims of abuse or any other crimes, or other subjects who might not be capable in giving or denying consent.

Other newsworthy incidents that need careful consideration in covering include hostage crises, suicide incidents, and armed conflicts, among others.

The fifth principle is *stewardship* or the realization and actualization that journalists, too, are guardians of the public's trust in the media. As a form of public service, journalists should be transparent and accountable to the general public for the actions they make which involves the reporting that they do.

It encompasses the four other principles in that a journalist's observance of truth and freedom, and respect for justice and of fellow human beings showcases his/her commitment to public service.

How do you suppose these can be applied in reporting the elections?

Consider which areas of the coverage of elections where you might face ethical dilemmas. Payouts may be done during the campaign period for favorable coverage. Disinformation is also widespread even before the election period (*See 4.4. Fact-checking Methodologies, p. 42*).

Have a discussion within your media organizations on how to handle instances where you are put into a bind.

Code of Ethics

The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), a “broad-based journalism organization, dedicated to encouraging the free practice of journalism and stimulating high standards of ethical behavior,” has one of the more comprehensive codified journalism ethics around the world. The SPJ Code of Ethics identifies four principles as the foundations of ethical journalism, namely: (1) seek the truth and report it, (2) minimize harm, (3) act independently, and (4) be accountable and transparent. (SPJ Code of Ethics, <https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>)

Widely recognized, the SPJ Code of Ethics is translated into different languages. Case studies are also available on their website for a more in-depth understanding of how the code could guide journalists with ethical dilemmas.

Society of Professional Journalists

CODE of ETHICS

PREAMBLE

Members of the Society of Professional Journalists believe that public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy. Ethical journalism strives to ensure the free exchange of information that is accurate, fair and thorough. An ethical journalist acts with integrity.

The Society declares these four principles as the foundation of ethical journalism and encourages their use in its practice by all people in all media.

SEEK TRUTH AND REPORT IT

Ethical journalism should be accurate and fair. Journalists should be honest and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.

Journalists should:

- ▶ Take responsibility for the accuracy of their work. Verify information before releasing it. Use original sources whenever possible.
- ▶ Remember that neither speed nor format excuses inaccuracy.
- ▶ Provide context. Take special care not to misrepresent or oversimplify in promoting, previewing or summarizing a story.
- ▶ Gather, update and correct information throughout the life of a news story.
- ▶ Be cautious when making promises, but keep the promises they make.
- ▶ Identify sources clearly. The public is entitled to as much information as possible to judge the reliability and motivations of sources.
- ▶ Consider sources' motives before promising anonymity. Reserve anonymity for sources who may face danger, retribution or other harm, and have information that cannot be obtained elsewhere. Explain why anonymity was granted.
- ▶ Diligently seek subjects of news coverage to allow them to respond to criticism or allegations of wrongdoing.
- ▶ Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information unless traditional, open methods will not yield information vital to the public.
- ▶ Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable. Give voice to the voiceless.
- ▶ Support the open and civil exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.
- ▶ Recognize a special obligation to serve as watchdogs over public affairs and government. Seek to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open, and that public records are open to all.
- ▶ Provide access to source material when it is relevant and appropriate.
- ▶ Boldly tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience. Seek sources whose voices we seldom hear.
- ▶ Avoid stereotyping. Journalists should examine the ways their values and experiences may shape their reporting.
- ▶ Label advocacy and commentary.
- ▶ Never deliberately distort facts or context, including visual information. Clearly label illustrations and re-enactments.
- ▶ Never plagiarize. Always attribute.

MINIMIZE HARM

Ethical journalism treats sources, subjects, colleagues and members of the public as human beings deserving of respect.

Journalists should:

- ▶ Balance the public's need for information against potential harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance or undue intrusiveness.

ACT IMPARTIALLY

The highest and primary obligation of ethical journalism is to serve the public.

Journalists should:

- ▶ Show compassion for those who may be affected by news coverage. Use heightened sensitivity when dealing with juveniles, victims of sex crimes, and sources or subjects who are inexperienced or unable to give consent. Consider cultural differences in approach and treatment.
- ▶ Recognize that legal access to information differs from an ethical justification to publish or broadcast.
- ▶ Realize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than public figures and others who seek power, influence or attention. Weigh the consequences of publishing or broadcasting personal information.
- ▶ Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity, even if others do.
- ▶ Balance a suspect's right to a fair trial with the public's right to know. Consider the implications of identifying criminal suspects before they face legal charges.
- ▶ Consider the long-term implications of the extended reach and permanence of publication. Provide updated and more complete information as appropriate.

BE ACCOUNTABLE AND TRANSPARENT

Ethical journalism means taking responsibility for one's work and explaining one's decisions to the public.

Journalists should:

- ▶ Explain ethical choices and processes to audiences. Encourage a civil dialogue with the public about journalistic practices, coverage and news content.
- ▶ Respond quickly to questions about accuracy, clarity and fairness.
- ▶ Acknowledge mistakes and correct them promptly and prominently. Explain corrections and clarifications carefully and clearly.
- ▶ Expose unethical conduct in journalism, including within their organizations.
- ▶ Abide by the same high standards they expect of others.

CONTACT THE SOCIETY

For more information on the Society of Professional Journalists or for more on journalism ethics, visit SPJ's website at spj.org or contact SPJ at:

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 Improving & Protecting Journalism

 **SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS**

REVISED SEPTEMBER 2014

Another more comprehensive code of ethics is the Associated Press (AP) News Values and Principles which outlines the standards and practices like when dealing with anonymous sources and cases where there are conflicts of interest. AP also provides a guideline on social media use. (News Values and Principles by the Associated Press, <https://www.ap.org/about/news-values-and-principles/>)

There are also guides on covering specific sectors which have been formulated to respond to the sensitive nature of sectors (children, LGBTIQ+) and topics (war and conflict).

In Southeast Asia, there are ethical guidelines which organizations have put together like the Philippine Press Institute Journalists' Code of Ethics (<https://philpressinstitute.net/journalists-code-of-ethics-2/>) and the Cambodian Center for Independent Media's Code of Ethics for Cambodian Journalists (https://ccimcambodia.org/?page_id=502), among many other guidelines for journalists.

In Myanmar, media organizations like The Irrawaddy and Mizzima have adopted their own codes of ethics. The Irrawaddy has what it calls the "The Irrawaddy Journalism Guidelines for Staff Writers" (<https://www.irrawaddy.com/code-of-ethics-2>). Adopted in 2007, the media organization said the code aims to "ensure professional and ethical conduct" from its staff reporters and "maintain an exemplary level of accurate reporting" for its readers.

Mizzima has a Code of Ethics (<http://mizzima.com/code-ethics>) which it said its journalists adopted in Delhi, India on 1 October 2004.

The Media Law of Myanmar also has a code of conduct for journalists of which violation of certain provisions have corresponding penalties. Here's the code of conduct under Article 9 of the law:¹

¹ Media Law translation by Free Expression Myanmar

9. *A News Media worker is responsible to comply with the following codes of conduct –*
- (a) Evaluation shall be performed to ensure accuracy and reliability of every bit of information and their completeness.
 - (b) When incorrect news have been published and amendment/revision is necessary, and this takes place in the Print Media, this revision shall have to be printed in the eye-catching position of the page or, if in other media, this should be published immediately.
 - (c) While news regarding some cases for which litigation is being run is published, the person prosecuted shall be considered innocent until the court has passed its judgment and any news related criticism which means disregard to the court shall be avoided.
 - (d) While news photos, voices and pictures are published, improper ways of modifying them with the help of certain technologies shall have to be avoided.
 - (e) Apart from criticisms, opinions and features, no other views and opinions of journalists or reporters shall be comprised of.
 - (f) Intellectual properties which belong to others shall not be plagiarized or published without asking for their permission.
 - (g) Writing news which relate to the interest of the public, writing style which deliberately affects the reputation of a specific person or an organization or generates negative impact to the human right shall be avoided.
 - (h) Ways of writing which may inflame conflicts regarding nationality, religion and race shall be avoided.

- (i) Ethics and regulations which are published by the Myanmar News Media Council shall be obeyed.

The law also established the Myanmar Press Council (MPC) which is tasked to monitor and enhance the quality of the news media. MPC has put together a code of media ethics (<http://myanmarpresscouncil.org/laws/media-ethic>). MPC is also putting together an updated code of conduct for journalists covering the elections in preparation for the 2020 General Election expected to be held in November.

Social Media Guidelines

News reporting now is extended up to social media where journalists maintain accounts to gather information, talk to sources, share their work, and engage with the audiences/readers.

While social media use of journalists is encouraged by almost all newsrooms, most social media guidelines would recognize that the use for work and personal are not exclusively separate and can cross paths at several points thus journalists are enjoined to be guided accordingly.

In the social media guideline of The New York Times, the news organization reminds its staff that in addition to the guideline, they should still observe the newsroom's Ethical Journalism guidelines.

But as a general rule, the BBC puts it simply in their guideline: "Don't do anything stupid."

Attached in a separate is a matrix of salient points in the social media guidelines of several news organizations which journalists can consider and follow when using social media.

Matrix of social media guidelines for journalists

	The New York Times Social Media Guidelines (2017)	BBC News Group Social Media Guidance for Staff (2015)	Social Media Guidelines for AP Employees
Refrain from expressing partisan opinion or political affiliations on your social media accounts as this could affect not only the reporter but the media organization as source of fair and balanced news.	In social media posts, our journalists must not express partisan opinions, promote political views, endorse candidates, make offensive comments or do anything else that undercuts The Times's journalistic reputation. Our journalists should be especially mindful of appearing to take sides on issues that The Times is seeking to cover objectively.	Where individuals identify themselves as being linked with the BBC, or are programme makers, editorial staff, reporters or presenters primarily associated with the BBC, their activities on social media have the potential to compromise the BBC's impartiality and to damage its reputation.	Employees may not include political affiliations in their profiles and should not make any postings that express political views. AP staffers must be aware that opinions they express may damage the AP's reputation as an unbiased source of news. AP employees must refrain from declaring their views on contentious public issues in any public forum and must not take part in organized action in support of causes or movements.
Be mindful that posts you publish on "private" accounts may not necessarily remain public. Consider that almost anything you share online, no matter the privacy settings placed, might go public.	We consider all social media activity by our journalists to come under this policy. While you may think that your Facebook page, Twitter feed, Instagram, Snapchat or other social media accounts are private zones, separate from your role at The Times, in fact everything we post or "like" online is to some degree public. And everything we do in public is likely to be associated with The Times.	Disclaimers written in biographies such as 'my views not the BBC's' provide no defence against personal expressions of opinion on social media that may conflict with BBC guidelines. Individuals involved in the production or presentation of any output in News or other factual areas that regularly deal with a range of public policy issues have a particular responsibility to avoid damaging the BBC's impartiality.	Employees should be mindful that any opinions or personal information they disclose about themselves or colleagues may be linked to the AP's name. That's true even if staffers restrict their pages to viewing only by friends. We recommend customizing your privacy settings on Facebook to determine what you share and with whom. However, as multitudes of people have learned all too well, virtually nothing is truly private on the Internet. It's all too easy for someone to copy material out of restricted pages and redirect it elsewhere for wider viewing.
Also consider that the friends you add, the pages you like, and the posts you like and share might be perceived as something you subscribe to or endorse. Balance is key to minimize perception of partisanship or bias.	Avoid joining private and "secret" groups on Facebook and other platforms that may have a partisan orientation. You should also refrain from registering for partisan events on social media. If you are joining these groups for reporting purposes, please take care in what you post.	Where our official accounts follow others, we should ensure that we reflect due impartiality in our choice of accounts to follow - similarly if our official accounts share or like content originally published by others.	It is acceptable to extend and accept Facebook friend requests from sources, politicians and newsmakers if necessary for reporting purposes, and to follow them on Twitter. However, friending and "liking" political candidates or causes may create a perception among people unfamiliar with the protocol of social networks that AP staffers are advocates. Therefore, staffers should try to make this kind of contact with figures on both sides of controversial issues. We should avoid interacting with newsmakers on their public pages - for instance, commenting on their posts.
	If you are linking to other sources, aim to reflect a diverse collection of viewpoints. Sharing a range of news, opinions or satire from others is usually appropriate. But consistently linking to only one side of a debate can leave the impression that you, too, are taking sides.	Expressions of opinion on social media can take many forms - from straightforward tweets or updates, sharing or liking content, following particular accounts or using campaigning or political hashtags. If for example a member of staff repeatedly likes or shares, without comment, content reflecting a particular point of view on a matter of public controversy it might create the impression that an individual agrees with that view. Likewise if a member of staff only follows social media accounts reflecting one point of view on a matter of public controversy that might create a similar impression.	Retweets, like tweets, should not be written in a way that looks like you're expressing a personal opinion on the issues of the day. A retweet with no comment of your own can easily be seen as a sign of approval of what you're relaying. However, we can judiciously retweet opinionated material if we make clear we're simply reporting it, much as we would quote it in a story. Introductory words help make the distinction. These cautions apply even if you say on your Twitter profile that retweets do not constitute endorsements. Many people who see your tweets and retweets will never look at your Twitter bio.
Be polite and respectful when talking to people on social media as in any other conversations. Avoid engaging in hostile discussions.	Always treat others with respect on social media. If a reader questions or criticizes your work or social media post, and you would like to respond, be thoughtful. Do not imply that the person hasn't carefully read your work. If the criticism is especially aggressive or inconsiderate, it's probably best to refrain from responding. We also support the right of our journalists to mute or block people on social media who are threatening or abusive. (But please avoid muting or blocking people for mere criticism of you or your reporting.)	Staff should also not post offensive or derogatory comments or content on social media and avoid abusing their position as a BBC employee in personal interactions.	AP is strongly in favor of engaging with those who consume our content. Most feedback we receive is constructive, and any substantive criticism of our content should be taken seriously, however it may be phrased. However, it's best to avoid protracted back-and-forth exchanges with angry people that become less constructive with each new round. Abusive, bigoted, obscene and/or racist comments should be flagged to the Nerve Center immediately and, if appropriate, to AP Global Security (contact dspriggs@ap.org).
Always alert the newsdesk first on breaking news events for guidance before sharing on any social media platform.	We believe in the value of using social media to provide live coverage and to offer live updates. But there may be times when we prefer that our journalists focus their first efforts on our own digital platforms. We generally want to publish exclusives on our own platforms first, not on social media, but there may be instances when it makes sense to post first on social media. Consult your supervisors for guidance.		AP journalists have live-tweeted news events on several occasions with great success.*
Erroneous social media posts should be avoided at all cost but if an error is committed, and a post need to be taken down for it, a new post should explain the circumstance of the take down.	Be transparent. If you tweeted an error or something inappropriate and wish to delete the tweet, be sure to quickly acknowledge the deletion in a subsequent tweet. Please consult our social media corrections policy for guidance.	We should also be transparent about errors, corrections and apologies as a result of any mistakes we make on our branded social media accounts. We should ensure we connect the correction or apology clearly with original error. If in doubt consult social media leads or Editorial Policy.	Twitter.com allows us to delete tweets we've sent. Deletion, however, removes the tweet only from Twitter.com and perhaps some other Twitter clients. Tweets of ours that have been retweeted or reposted elsewhere will still remain publicly visible. If you believe a tweet should be deleted, contact a Nerve Center manager to discuss the situation. Erroneous tweets or other social media posts need to be corrected as quickly and transparently as errors in any other AP service. This applies to AP-related tweets or posts on personal accounts as well. The thing to do is to tweet or post that we made a mistake and explain exactly what was wrong.
Journalism is a practice of verification. Avoid sharing unconfirmed and unverified content.	Exercise caution when sharing scoops or provocative stories from other organizations that The Times has not yet confirmed. In some cases, a tweet of another outlet's story by a Times Reporter has been interpreted as The Times confirming the story, when it in fact has not.		Staffers should always refrain from spreading unconfirmed rumors online, regardless of whether other journalists or news outlets have shared the reports; because of staffers' affiliation with AP, doing so could lend credence to reports that may well be incorrect.
Safety is of utmost importance. Consider that there might be activities on social media that could compromise or threaten the safety of journalists, their colleagues, and the subjects they work with.	If you feel threatened by someone on social media, please inform your supervisors immediately. The Times has policies in place to protect the safety of our journalists.		Staffers must not post on social networks any information that could jeopardize the safety of AP staff - for example, the exact location of staffers reporting from a place where journalists may be kidnapped or attacked. This also applies to reports of the arrest or disappearance of staffers. In some cases, publicity may in fact help a staffer, but this determination must be made by AP managers handling the situation.
Sources and information found on social media should be vetted as is the practice in regular circumstances.			It can be difficult to verify the identity of sources found on social networks. Sources discovered there should be vetted in the same way as those found by any other means. If a source you encounter on a social network claims to be an official from a company, organization or government agency, call the place of business to confirm the identity, just as you would if a source called on the phone.
Finally, observing the ethical guidelines is still very much encouraged.	In addition to these social media guidelines, staff members should be familiar with and follow the newsroom's Ethical Journalism guidelines, which apply here as well.	Social media platforms provide an invaluable opportunity for both BBC output and staff to share content and engage with others in an informal environment. But just as everything we do on our own platforms is informed by the Editorial Guidelines, so is all our activity on social media platforms - whether it is in a 'professional' or 'personal' or capacity.	AP's Social Media Guidelines are based on our Statement of News Values and Principles.

AP guidelines on live-tweeting

- News events (press conferences, sports events, etc.) that are being broadcast live: AP staffers are welcome to live-tweet these events. However, when major news breaks, a staffer's first obligation is to provide full details to the appropriate news desk for use in AP services if the desk isn't tuned in already. After providing this information and handling any other immediate AP work, the staffer is then free to tweet or post information about the news development.
- Exclusive material: AP news services must have the opportunity to publish exclusive text, photo and video material before it appears on social networks. Once that material has been published, staffers are welcome to tweet and post a link to it on AP or subscriber platforms.
- Incremental reporting threads: AP staffers should never share on social networks incremental information that, if closely held, could lead to important, exclusive content.
- Other content: Other material you have gathered may be shared on social networks. This includes material we commonly refer to as "cutting room floor" content — material that is not needed for a specific AP product.

In addition, if you are unsure if a post adheres to responsible use of social media, The Times suggested to evaluate using the following questions and/or consult your supervisors or other newsroom leaders:

1. Would you express similar views in an article on the news organization's platform?
2. Would someone who reads your post have grounds for believing that you are biased on a particular issue?
3. If readers see your post and notice that you're a Times journalist, would that affect their view of the news organization's coverage as fair and partial?
4. Could your post hamper your colleagues' ability to effectively do their jobs?
5. If someone were to look at your entire social media feed, including links and retweets, would they have doubts about your ability to cover news events in a fair and impartial way?

Unlike leaders in government posts, journalists are neither elected nor assigned by the public as sources of information. While subscription to any journalism code is voluntary in most cases, the adherence to the ethical practice of journalism is a form of commitment to the readers, journalism being a public service, of the quality of information that they receive from the media and a reflection of the values and principles journalists uphold and protect.

Sources:

SPJ Code of Ethics (<https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>)

Staying Alive: A Safety Manual for Journalists. Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism. Second Edition, 2006

“The Pyramid of Journalism Competence: what journalists need to know.” Poynter Institute. 12 May 2014 (<https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2014/the-pyramid-of-journalism-competence-what-journalists-need-to-know/>)

“The Times Issues Social Media Guidelines for the Newsroom,” 13 October 2017 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/13/reader-center/social-media-guidelines.html>)

Social Media Guidelines for AP Employees (https://www.ap.org/assets/documents/social-media-guidelines_tcm28-9832.pdf)

Guidance: Social Media. BBC Editorial Guidelines. (<https://www.bbc.com/editorialguidelines/guidance/social-media>)



6. Media Safety

6.1. Physical Security

The election campaign period can be exciting yet dangerous for journalists as they can be targets of threats and attacks by those who do not want free and fair elections. It is important for journalists to be cautious and prepared for security threats they may encounter.

Journalist organizations, editors and media owners should encourage political parties and the government to regard the safety of journalists and to treat them with respect. The joint statements can be made and the authorities must respect these demands.

Journalists who are gathering election-related information, need to know their rights and responsibilities, as well as the rules of the election.

Journalists need to be careful not to wear the symbol, color, and the hats of political parties. And the journalists are not to enjoy the favor of a political party and the elected representative. The reporter's ID should always be carried. Do not bring any weapons at all. The journalists can also deny very risky assignments but if they proceed to pursue risky areas, journalists must ensure that necessary precautions are observed.

(For example, on the waterway, one needs to bring a life jacket or on the trip to a conflict-prone crowd, wearing a press jacket is a must. Press jackets can be leased at the Myanmar Press Office and can be worn with a knit harness and it can cushion some kind of beating and hitting.)

If journalists receive threats or are attacked, these instances should be reported by the other journalists. Reported to the Election Commission and proper authorities and requested justice and protection. Journalists should always inform editors, a member of the family or a colleague where they are going and what they are doing.

The best protection for journalists are the moral standards of accuracy and transparency, impartiality and accountability. The reporting should focus on the voice and interests of the public, not on the favor of the particular side.

Instead of adhering to the rules of the code, highlighting your preferred candidate, including your own colleagues and your own newspaper, would create a host of enemies.

- The journalists' safety manual by The Myanmar Press Council and the International Media Support (IMS) could be used as a guide for individual journalists and media outlets.
- Predicting and managing the potential risks - It is important to weigh the potential challenges and risks before letting the correspondent report on the field. When something happens, necessary security protocol should be placed in advance.
- Prevention and Response - Journalists should be trained on how to communicate during emergency situations, using first aid, avoid dangerous behaviors and clothing; Training should be done to prepare mental and emotional stability.
- Gender Considerations - If women are asked to report on the field, gender context and issues, local content of the communities should also be considered.

6.2. Digital Security

There are a handful of guides and tools available on digital security which journalists can stock up on to protect themselves from threats and attacks in the digital realm. Digital security tools range from user-friendly to complex technology. The lack of understanding about the need for such tools, as well as the inadequate digital acumen, can be overwhelming and journalists might just end up compromising their digital safety rather than countering threats and attacks.

Digital Security Evaluation

Before considering choosing what tools to use and techniques to employ, it is important to have an assessment of one's use and digital habits to identify the possible digital security threats, its level of severity, and where and how attacks may happen.

Here are some questions to think about in assessing your digital well-being:

1. What digital devices do you use?
2. What purpose do those devices serve you?
3. What data are stored in those devices?
4. What measures do you put in place to secure your device, activities on those devices, and data stored in them?

1. What digital devices do you use?

It is nearly impossible for anyone in this modern digital age not to own at least one digital device. In fact, as of January 2019, there are more mobile subscribers in Myanmar than the total population with 56.57 million mobile subscribers versus the 54.10 million total population, according to We Are Social.

In a highly interconnected world, even home devices such as lights or your television are connected online which generate, store, and send out data through the internet.

List down all the digital devices you use: A mobile phone? A laptop? Do you have a smart TV or any other smart home devices?

2. What purpose do those devices serve you?

Mobile phones have multiple functions and are no longer confined to just being communication devices that people use to send and receive text messages and calls. The camera function makes phones as multimedia devices that capture and store photos and videos. The availability of apps makes mobile phones act like mini computers that can do multiple other tasks.

Identify the purpose of each of the digital devices you use: Do you have a separate phone for work and personal use? Do you use a personal laptop aside from your work computer? What tasks or information do you ask your smart devices to do/find?

3. What data are stored in those devices?

Digital devices are treasure chests of data. Your IP address can help identify you, your location, and your activities online. Computers and mobile phones have storage capacity used to save photos, videos, documents, and other files.

The possibilities are almost endless when it comes to the data you produce and consume then store in the digital devices you use.

Identify the data you generate and store in your devices: Which among them are sensitive or confidential? Do you share personal data online?

4. What digital security measures do you employ?




Users can set passwords to protect their mobile phones and laptops – as well as services used on those devices such as email, social media accounts, bank accounts, among others – from unwanted access.

But aside from passwords, identify what security measures you employ to protect your device, the activities you do with them, and the data that you store in them: Do you encrypt the files you store? Are there extra security measures, like two-step verification, you use aside from password protection? Do you have backups of your files? If you've previously experienced digital security issues, what measures did you take to get around them?

Now based on your responses to the questions, you can form an assessment of what data you generate, where these are stored, and your risk factor. Then prioritize which areas need immediate response from those you can pay more attention to later.

A rule of thumb can be to focus on areas where you generate or send out more sensitive data within the least secure environments as high priority. Assess which areas are moderate to low risk, then plan accordingly.

Below is a sample matrix of possible responses to the digital security assessment questionnaire:

			
What digital devices do you use?	Smartphone Analog phone	Laptop Desktop Tablet	Smart Watch Smart Home Assistant Smart TV
What purposes do those devices serve you?	Texts and calls Photo and video recorder Audio recorder Internet browsing	Document processing Internet browsing	Record health, fitness, and sleep data Automate home devices and functions Entertainment
What data are stored in those devices?	Contacts Photos Videos	Photos Videos Documents	Health data Television viewing habits Personal data



What digital security measures do you employ?

Password protection
Up to date OS

Password protection
File backup

Secure Wi-Fi connection

Where do you think you are most vulnerable? Here are some of the most common tools digital security experts suggest to use in order to beef up your digital security.

Messaging and Video Conferencing

Signal (<https://signal.org/>)
Telegram (<https://telegram.org/>)
Whatsapp (<https://www.whatsapp.com/>)
Jitsi (<https://jitsi.org/>)

Email Encryption

ProtonMail (<https://proton-mail.com/>)
PGP Email Encryption (Enigmail, <https://www.enigmail.net/index.php/en/>; Gnu Privacy Guard, <https://gnupg.org/>)

File Encryption

VeraCrypt (<https://www.veracrypt.fr/en/Home.html>)
Keepass (Encrypted password database, <https://keepassxc.org/>)

Circumvention Tools

TOR (The Onion Routing, <https://www.torproject.org/>)
VPN (Virtual Private Network; ProtonVPN, <https://protonvpn.com/>; OpenVPN, <https://openvpn.net/>)
TAILS (The Amnesic Incognito Live System, <https://tails.boum.org/index.en.html>)

Social Media Security

Aside from tools and devices, there are simple things to consider in terms of digital security like setting up accounts on social media platforms with security and privacy in mind.

There have been incidents where the data of social media users were mined without explicit consent, and used to profile users and target them with ads that would most like resonate with them. This is what happened with the Cambridge Analytica case in the US where the data gathered about Facebook users were used to profile users and target them with political ads during elections.

It is dangerous, especially for areas where social media usage is almost synonymous to internet use. Aside from being more discerning of how one uses social media, a deeper understanding of privacy and security functions set in social media could help identify potential threats and unwanted activities and services, even prevent them from happening.

Please see in a separate page for some of the important settings Facebook and Twitter users can look into to better understand how these platforms gather, process, and use their data as well as added security layers they can implement within the platforms.

	Facebook	Twitter
<p>Location Data</p> <p>Facebook users restrict location history tracking for mobile devices while on Twitter, location information for posts can also be restricted.</p>	Settings → Location → Location History.	Settings → Privacy and Safety → Tweets → Location information
<p>Facial Recognition</p> <p>Facebook users can opt out of the facial recognition capacity.</p>	Settings → Face Recognition.	
<p>Photo Tagging</p> <p>Photo tagging for both Facebook and Twitter can be restricted and disallowed, respectively.</p> <p>While other Facebook users may still be able to tag users in posts and photos, this can be restricted and users can choose to filter which ones appear in their timeline. In a tagged post, users can also have the tag removed.</p> <p>Meanwhile, for Twitter, users may still be tagged in posts with photos.</p>	Settings → Timeline and Tagging	Settings → Privacy and Safety → Tweets → Photo tagging
<p>Two-Factor Authentication</p> <p>For added security, both Facebook and Twitter users can choose to turn on the two-factor authentication feature where users will be asked to enter a special login code acquired through various means like through an SMS, an authentication app, or a physical security key</p>	Settings → Security and Login → Two-Factor Authentication.	Settings → Account → Security → Two-factor authentication
<p>Log in details</p> <p>Facebook and Twitter keep a record of locations where and devices used to log into the platforms. Users can review this record and see suspicious login instances even logout of them immediately.</p>	Settings → Security and Login → When You're Logged In.	Settings → Privacy and safety → Personalization and data → See your Twitter data → Apps, devices & information → Connected apps → Apps and sessions
<p>Login alerts</p> <p>Facebook users can setup alerts about logins from unrecognized devices or browsers while Twitter sends push notifications and email alerts detected suspicious logins or logins to new devices for the first time.</p>	Settings → Security and Login → Setting Up Extra Security.	Twitter sends push notifications and email alerts if they detect a suspicious login or when logging into new devices for the first time.
<p>Privacy</p> <p>Facebook's privacy settings allows users to choose which posts other users can see, who can send friends requests, see a user's friend's list, look up a user using their email address or phone number, and whether or not users will allow to be indexed in search engines outside of Facebook.</p> <p>While Twitter users can choose to allow if they could be found on the platform through their email and phone number, display media that may contain sensitive content, choose to set accounts to private, and control how Twitter personalizes content, collects and shares certain data about the users.</p>	Settings → Privacy	Settings → Privacy and security
<p>Other services</p> <p>Facebook and Twitter accounts can be used to login to other connected online services like Whatsapp and Instagram for Facebook and Periscope for Twitter. Other services are also available inside and outside the platform like games, online payment, and many others.</p> <p>Users can review and revoke access of apps and services to the data of Facebook and Twitter users.</p>	Settings → Apps and Websites Settings → Instant Games	Settings → Privacy and safety → Personalization and data → See your Twitter data → Apps, devices & information → Apps, devices & information/ Connected apps
<p>Off-platform activities</p> <p>Of services outside of Facebook where a user's account is used to connect and login, Facebook keeps a list of off-Facebook activities or information shared with the platform. This can be reviewed by users.</p>	Settings → Your Facebook Information → Off-Facebook Activity.	
<p>Download Personal Data</p> <p>Facebook and Twitter users can request to download the information of users generated on the platforms.</p>	Settings → Your Facebook Information → Download Your Information	Settings → Privacy and safety → Personalization and data → See your Twitter data → Download an archive of your data
<p>Uploaded Data</p> <p>Mobile applications of Facebook and Twitter can upload the contacts list of users. Facebook has a function which can continuously upload the user's contacts to the platform. Users can check, revoke contacts uploading, and delete contacts uploaded on these platforms.</p>	<p>On your mobile app:</p> <p>Settings and Privacy → Settings → Media and Contacts</p> <p>Check contacts uploaded to Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/mobile/facebook/contacts/?tab=contacts</p>	Settings → Privacy and safety → Discoverability and contacts → Manage contacts
<p>Data generated for ad targeting</p> <p>Ads that Facebook and Twitter users see on the platform are based on the data gathered from their activities and information provided. Users can, although limited, review and limit personal data shared with advertisers.</p>	Settings → Ads	Settings → Privacy and safety → Personalization and data → See your Twitter data → Interests and ads data → Interests from Twitter/Inferred interests from partners/Tailored audiences

Additional resources on digital security

- Security in-a-box (<https://securityinabox.org/en>) is created by the Tactical Tech Collective and Front Line Defenders. The Tactics Guide covers basic principles including step-by-step guide on installing, configuring, and using essential digital security software and services.
- Digital Security Helpline (<https://www.accessnow.org/help/>) by Access Now works with individuals and organizations at risk and assist through rapid-response emergency assistance to those under attack.
- The Digital security resource page of the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) (<https://gijn.org/digital-security/>) puts together basic tips on improving the digital security of journalists as well as links to other digital security guides and tips.

Journalists can also look at projects of organizations working on the intersection of technology and human rights for additional knowledge on the impact of abuses, threats, and attacks online to free expression and press freedom:

- Association for Progressive Communications, APC (<https://www.apc.org/>)
- Electronic Frontier Foundation, EFF (<https://www.eff.org/>)
- EngageMedia (<https://www.engagemedia.org/>)
- Myanmar ICT for Development Organization, MIDO (<https://www.facebook.com/Myanmarido/>)
- Privacy International, PI (<https://privacyinternational.org/>)
- Tactical Tech (<https://tacticaltech.org/>)
- Qurium - The Media Foundation (<https://www.qurium.org/>)



7. Useful Contacts

7.1. Union Election Commission (UEC) and Sub Election Commission

No	Name	Focal Contact Persons	Phone Number
1	Kachin Sub Election Commission	Daw Mary Menon, Chairperson U Htun Aung Khaing (DD/EO)	074-2521678, 0742522745(Fax)
2	Kayah Sub Election Commission	U Than Soe, Chairperson U Kyaw Sann Win, (DD/EO)	083-2223128, 083-2221137(Fax) 083-2224125(Fax)
3	Kayin Sub Election Commission	U Kyaw Win Maung, Chairperson U Maung Maung Naing, DD/EO	085-23397, 085-21202, 085-22209(Fax)
4	Chin Sub Election Commission	U Uk Nawl, Chairperson U Linn Kyaw, DD/EO	070-21599, 070-21629(Fax)
5	Mon Sub Election Commission	U Khin Maung Aye, Chairperson U Hein Lin Htet, DD/EO	057-24419, 057-24095(Fax)
6	Rakhine Sub Election Commission	Daw Tin Hlaing, Chairperson U Thurein Htut, DD/EO	043-21556, 043-22887 043-229689(Fax)
7	Shan Sub Election Commission	U Htin Kyaw, Chairperson U Zaw Myint Win, DD/EO	081-2124986 081-2121321(Fax) 081-2125567(Fax)
8	Sagaing Sub Election Commission	U Tin Oo, Chairperson U Aung Myo Lwin, DD/EO	071 22774
9	Magway Sub Election Commission	U Khin Maung Myint, Chairperson U Soe Htut Oo DD/EO	063 2028396 (Fax) 063 2028691

No	Name	Focal Contact Persons	Phone Number
10	Yangon Sub Election Commission	U Kyi Myint, Chairperson U Tin Maung Aye DD/EO	01-2306250, 01-230626 01-2305685(Fax)
11	Mandalay Sub Election Commission	Dr. Aung Win Kyi, Chairperson U Kyaw Kyaw Soe, DD/EO	02-4069042 02-4039440(Fax)
12	Bago Sub Election Commission	U Aung Myint, Chairperson U Aung Kyaw Moe, DD/EO	052-2221024, 052-2201314 052-2201848(Fax)
13	Ayeyarwaddy Sub Election Commission	U Khin Mg Win, Chairperson U Myint Naing, DD/EO	042-23783, 042-21890(Fax)
14	Tanintharyi Sub Election Commission	U ZawLinn, Chairperson U Htain Linn Oo, DD/EO	059-2023525 059-2021211(Fax)
15	Union Election Commission		067-404315, 067- 404313, 067- 404220

7.2. CSOs

No	Name of the Organization	Focal Contact Person	Phone Number	Email Address
1	Bago Observer Group	U Lay Naing Oo	09 428046272	bagoobservergroup@gmail.com
2	Civil Authorize Negotiate Organization (C_A_N - Org)	Saw Zin Maung Soe, Chairperson	09 330 350 68 (Office)	canorg.myanmar@gmail.com
3	Civic Development Institute (CDI)	Salai Bawi Roe San	09 898128960 (Office)	salai.bawiroesan@gmail.com
4	Generation Tree	Daw Swe Mar Oo	09 45645 6190	swemar599@gmail.com
5	Horn Bill Organization (HBO)	U Chan Lian, Executive Director	09 420105362	hornbillorg@gmail.com
6	Kadu Youth Development	U Than Zaw Oo, Project Director	09 790 731736	kaduthanzaw@gmail.com
7	Kanbawza Youth Library	Daw May Hnin Kyaw	09 765 211398	mayhnin71@gmail.com
8	Khanti Foundation	Daw Yin Yin Win, Executive Director	09 443241959 (office)	yyw.khanti.org@gmail.com
9	Myanmar Fifth Estate	U Soe Lin Htoot	09 798101588 09 423736756	thefifthpillar.tfp@gmail.com

No	Name of the Organization	Focal Contact Person	Phone Number	Email Address
10	Myanmar Network for Free and Fair Elections (MYFREL)	Daw Zin Mar Oo	09-263215643, 09-254278384	myanmar.myn-frel@gmail.com
11	Myanmar Independent Living Initiative (MILI)	Daw Yu Ya Thu Executive Director	09-450067247	info@mili.org.mm
12	New Myanmar Foundation (NMF)	Daw Mya Nandar Thin Executive Director	09-751007253	new.myanmar.foundation@gmail.com
13	Open Myanmar Initiative (OMI)	U Aye Kyaw Executive Director	09-420098735	office@omimyanmar.org
14	Panna Institute	Aung Naing Maw Assistance Program Manager	09-777731327	aungnaing-maw70@gmail.com
15	Peace and Justice Myanmar (PJM)	Daw Shwe Yee Win Executive Director	09-979037087	peaceandjustice.mm@gmail.com
16	People's Alliance for Credible Elections (PACE)	Sai Ye Kyaw Swar Myint Executive Director	09-253 379442	syksmyint@pacemyanmar.org

7. Useful Contacts

No	Name of the Organization	Focal Contact Person	Phone Number	Email Address
17	Phan Tee Eain (Creative Home)	Daw Khin Lay Nge, Director	09-44111 1667	director.pte@gmail.com phanteeain.myanmar@gmail.com
18	Rainmaker Organization	Daw Aye Thadar Aung Executive Director	09-420066222	rainmaker.mm.org@gmail.com
19	Scholar Institute	Ko Aung Shwe Oo	01-542 485	scholarinstitute.cep@gmail.com
20	The Fifth Pillar	U Nay Win Naing Program Director	09-965 052466	thefifthpillar.tfp@gmail.com
21	Yaung Chi Thit	Daw Khin Hla Director	09-250526789 (Office)	info@yaungchithit.org


7.3. INGOs

(1) Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)

 anfrel.myanmar@anfrel.org

 09 - 407835302


(2) Carter Center

 09 420078557

(3) Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD)


 09-770050429

(4) Democracy Reporting International (DRI)


 myanmar@democracy-reporting.org

(5) International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)


 info-myanmar@idea.int

 01- 389202


(6) International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)

 01- 534621

(7) International Republican Institute (IRI)

 01- 665804, 01- 661681(Fax)

(8) National Democratic Institute (NDI)

 01 - 549201

7.4. Political Parties

	Name of the Party	Focal Contact Person	Phone Number
1	Mro National Development Party	U Kyaw Min	09-448406202, 09-263478005, 043-70070
2	National Unity Party	U Thein Tun Secretary	01-557480, 01-557456, 01-386936, 01-541961, 01-554219(Fax)
3	La Hu National Development Party	U Ja Po Secretary	09- 49219672, 09-428219081, 081-23106, 09-5260294
4	Kokang Democracy and Unity Party	U Aung Kyaw Phyoo @ Haw Htike Kyin Co-Secretary 1	951133186, 01-559539, 081-24627, 081-22224, 09-69000971, 09-526219(Fax)
5	Pao National Organization Party (PNO)	U Kun Thein Phay Secretary	09-428218314, 081-2124691 (Fax), 09-36352335, 09-250343145, 09-2533336502
6	Democratic Party (Myanmar)	Daw Than Than Nu General Secretary	09-8020254, 01-541649, 09-5084963
7	Kayan national Party	Khoon Kalay Min Co-Secretary 1	081-56088, 09-792530587, 09-428005127
8	Rakhine State National United Party	Daw Ma Than Sein Secretary	09-421095833, 09- 42104245

	Name of the Party	Focal Contact Person	Phone Number
9	Kayin People Party	Saw Say Wah General Secretary	01-611612, 09-5180164, 09-250050806, 01-611238
10	Ta-Arng (Palaung) National Party	U Hun Kyaw Secretary	09-6712051, 09-2003541, 0943146250, 09-9040651
11	Party for Democracy and Peace	U Myo Nyunt Secretary	09-73204834
12	Shan Nationalities Democratic Party	Sai Bo Aung Secretary	09-73046206, 09-5159998, 081-202064,
13	United Democratic Party (UDP)	Daw Thidar Zin Co - Secretary	09-259560350, 09-253750925, 09-250799412, 067-500253, 067- 500236
14	The 88 Generation Student Youths (Union of Myanmar)	U Lay Soe Secretary	01-556554, 09-5197626
15	The Union of Myanmar Federation of National Politics	U Htay Ngwe Co - Secretary	01-556544, 09-5187991
16	National Political Alliance League	Kyaw Thu Aung General Secretary	09-49155983, 09-5333156, 09-73094213, 09-421722351
17	Wun Thar Nu Democratic Party	U Kyaw Kyaw Secretary	09-259045421, 09-799996441, 09-950150545
18	Modern People Party	Daw Ye Ye San Secretary	09-73238324, 09-8614372, 01-504882, 01-505307

7. Useful Contacts

	Name of the Party	Focal Contact Person	Phone Number
19	Union Democratic Party	Thaung Win Secretary	01-584261, 09-73203085, 09-448537914, 09-448537915
20	Peace for Diversity Party	Daw Wint War Htay Secretary	09-422536641, 09-43101001, 09-780156273, 09-252478008
21	Inn National Development Party	U King Nyo Secretary	081-209599, 09-428310011
22	Phlone-Sqaw Democratic Party	U Sabi Kyin Oo Secretary	09-425020498, 09-425032710, 058-233314, 058-22639, 09-49770115
23	National democratic Party for Development (NDPD)	U Khin Maung Zan Secretary	09-5132126, 09-5013683 (Win Tun Soe), 09-73041634
24	Union Solidarity and Development Party	U Thet Naing Win Secretary	067-419244, 09-5163285, 067-419257, 067-419274 (Fax)
25	Ethnic National Development Party	Sang Hlei Mang Secretary	09-43081763
26	Ka Man National Development Party	U Tin Hlaing Win Co - Secretary	09-73067314, 09-73205380, 09-73103983, 09-8635745
27	Kha Me National Development Party	U Lay Thar Kyaw Secretary	09-421053166, 09-425301804, 043-23088
28	National Democratic Force (NDF)	Dr. Win Naing Secretary	09-450015691, 09-5059640, 09-5137373, 09-2228347

	Name of the Party	Focal Contact Person	Phone Number
29	National Development and Peace Party (NDPP)	U Aye Htun Secretary	09-5174461, 09-73127914, 09-73117001
30	People Democracy Party		09-43176080, 02-5154902, 09-43011456, 09-43060910
31	New National Democratic Party	Daw Khine Sandar Co - Secretary	09-73095628, 09-73005267 (Win Shwe), 09-73020813
32	Bamar People's Party	U Thet Oo Secretary	09-49229271 (President), 01-296693
33	National League for Democracy	Nyan Win General Secretary	09-5179247, 01-555156 (Office, Fax)
34	Democratic Party For Myanmar New Society	U Thein Htun Secretary	09-425019450 (President), 056-21980
35	Myanmar National Congress	U Tin Aung Secretary	09-448541104
36	Mro Nationality Party	U Min Aung Co - Secretary	09-253083491, 09-252376381
37	Tai-Leng Nationalities Development Party (T.N.D.P)	U Sai Kyaw Nyunt Secretary	09-47015543, 09-2016916 (Saw Win Htun)
38	Asho Chin National Party	Salai Aung Min Hlaing Secretary	09-5043709, 01-646954
39	Shan Nationalities League for Democracy	Sai Nyunt Lwin Secretary	09-73241587, 0973225564
40	Danu National Democracy Party	U Ko Ko Secretary	09-49359008, 09-49359655, 09-49597398, 09-49250264

7. Useful Contacts

	Name of the Party	Focal Contact Person	Phone Number
41	Zomi Congress For Democracy	Pu Gint Kamg Lyan Secretary	09-421715011, 09-5199953 (Zam Za Mong), 01-397389
42	Shan State Kokang Democratic Party	U Myint Khaing Secretary	09-402612868, 09-43189486
43	Myanmar Farmers Development Party	Daw Khin Than Oo Secretary	09-5177714, 01-8551059, 09-43138632 (Khin Than Oo), 09-401629034
44	National Unity Congress Party	U Nyi Nyi Latt General Secretary	09-73010852, 09-250085016, 09-43057576, 09-5192761
45	Democracy and Human Rights Party	U Kyaw Soe Aung General Secretary	09-5007348, 01-667880, 09-73247887
46	National Prosperity Party	Daw San Thuzar General Secretary	09-250050155, 09-795563011, 09-49364232, 09-428034363, 09-425023602
47	Kachin National Congress (KNC)	U Zel Zaung Secretary	09-254082552, 09-454335203, 09-402763018
48	Lisu National Development Party (L.N.D.P)	U Lay May Thar Secretary	09-47010061, 074-28192
49	Dawei Nationalities Party	Daw Nwe Ni Thein Secretary	09-8595357, 09-73132317, 09-43121058
50	Federal Union Party	U Kyaw Zan Thar Co - Secretary 1	09-49347518, 09-2042996, 09-425301500

	Name of the Party	Focal Contact Person	Phone Number
51	Union Pa.O National Organization		09-5210485, 09-31490802, 09-420091079 (Khun Soe Myint)
52	Arakan National Party	U Khaing Pe Soe Secretary	09-250240100 (Htun Aung Kyaw)
53	Khumi(Khami) National Party		09-262935180(U Kyaw Htun), 09-73162817
54	Democratic Party For a New Society	U Thiha Htut Khin @ Thiha Secretary	09-420148501
55	Karen National Party	Mann Kyaw Nyein Secretary	09-49323849, 09-448021923
56	People's Party of Myanmar Farmers and Workers	Daw San San Kyawt Secretary 1	09-422529069, 09-49764573
57	Mro National Democracy Party (MNDP)	U Maung Ko Htay Win Secretary	09-73050743
58	Danu National Organization Party	U Nay Myo Secretary	09-49357844
59	Public Contribute Students Party	U Htay Lwin Secretary	09-421037988, 09-420020083 (Aung San)
60	Guiding Star Party	U Nyo Lin Maun Secretary	09-428168297, 09-421002252 (Htun Hlaing)
61	Shan-ni Solidarity Party (SSP)	Saw Win Tun Secretary	09-91010315, 09-2016916, 09-5192700
62	New Society Party	U Aung Zay Ya General Secretary	09-73248567, 09-257477337

7. Useful Contacts

	Name of the Party	Focal Contact Person	Phone Number
63	88 Generation Democracy Party	U Tin Aye Secretary	09-33351832
64	Lhaovo National Unity and Development Party(LNUDP)	U Day Wi Secretary	09-400041037, 09-47106927
65	New Era Union Party	Daw Aye Aye Shwin Secretary	09-8631516
66	Akha National Development Party	Ar Lel Secretary	09-5242351, 084-52398
67	Zo National Region Development Party	U Latt Swan Khaing Secretary 1	09-979637611, 09-50233815
68	National Development Party	Aung Phyo Kyaw General Secretary	09-33322666, 09-5001742, 09-783953501
69	Women Party (Mon)	Mi Than Than Swe Secretary	09-425283527
70	The Party For People	U Aye Theik Secretary	09-43163475, 09-79041288, 09-795870589
71	Union Farmer-Labour Force Party	Daw Mu Mu Cho Secretary	09-458021233, 09-33877511
72	Daingnet National Development Party (D.N.D.P)	U Tun Aye Maung Secretary	09-250326676
73	Myanmar People's Democratic Party	U Hlaing Phyo Secretary, Member	09-795707287, 09-970036251 (Office Hour), 09-795707287
74	Arakan League for Democracy Party	U Myo Kyaw Secretary	09-5143823
75	Public of Labour Party	U Yan Naung Soe Myint Secretary	09-33366683, 09-965086123

	Name of the Party	Focal Contact Person	Phone Number
76	Kayah State Democratic Party	U Thae Yal Secretary	09-780539806
77	Kayin National Democratic Party	Saw Chit Than Secretary	09-792499552
78	National United Democratic Party (N.U.D)	Dr. Aung Htay Secretary	09-428318366
79	People's Party	U Ye Naing Aung Secretary	09-448024088, 09-5166637 (Kyaw Lin)
80	Arakan Front Party (AFP)	Dr. Thein Htun Hla Secretary	09-421724380
81	Union Betterment Party (UBP)	Kyaw San Secretary	09-965202729
82	The Yeomanry Development Party (YDP)	U San Htun Sein Secretary	09-791662635, 09-5095480
83	Democratic Party of National Politics (DNP)		09-792036676, 09-2032853
84	Kachin State People's Party (KSPP)		09-2401150
85	Chin National League For Democracy Party	Ngain Sark	09-5160784
86	Mon Unity Party	Dr. Min Nwe Soe Secretary	09-255964445
87	Chin National Party (CNP)		09--256152752
88	New Democracy Party (Kachin) [N.D.P (Kachin)]		09-459449789, 09-459465453
89	Naga National Party (NNP)		09-400055434

7. Useful Contacts

	Name of the Party	Focal Contact Person	Phone Number
90	People force Party		09-406055767, 09-443433447
91	People's Pioneer Party		09-5183006
92	United Nationalities Democracy Party		09-778261658, 09-77337798, 09-253104071
93	Inn National League Party		09-794255595
94	Kachin National Party		09-403706476
95	Alliance of Myanmar's Workers and Farmer Party (A.M.W.F.P)		09-796952899
96	The 88 Generation Brotherhood Party		09-5121249, 09-765121249
97	Wa National Party		09-5261401, 09-403742540

This political parties' list is the update list on 2nd April, 2020.

Emergency Contacts

Police	199
Tourist Police (Tourist Safety Unit)	01-376166, 642742, 549209
Fire Service, Rescue	191
Ambulance	192
Red Cross	295 133
Airport	662 811



ANFREL Myanmar Office

Room No 701, No.84-C,
Golden Royal Sayar San Condo,
Sayar San Lane, Bahan Township,
Yangon, Myanmar
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