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Press Release

Observation Result of Voter Registration Monitoring and Voter List Audit in 2020

The Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL) annually monitor voter registration and audits Voter List since 2016. For only voter registration, COMFREL has deployed its observers to conduct the observation at 13 provinces; for voter list audit, COMFREL examined the official voter list to indicate duplicated and ghost voter names to ensure the accuracy of data in voter list and also to point out challenges of the voter in the process of getting registration.

COMFREL, according to the registration observation and the voter list audit, concludes that the registration and voter list still have better quality. But the right of eligible voters and the issuance of Identity Certification of voter registration (ICR) are still concerns. There is a need to have more efforts for the NEC, the RGC, and the National Assembly for the registration for eligible voters in foreign countries.

1. Voter Registration Preparation:

The voter registration and voter list update are to take place annually. In 2020, the registration operated in October with 10,382,752 estimated eligible voters allocated to 23,418 estimated polling stations.

Registration schedule was changed from May to October due to the pandemic of COVID-19. Then it is noted that because of the pandemic, migrant eligible voters had returned home and got registered, so in 2020 the registration has brought 268,611 equal to 89.42% of eligible voters into the voter list. Therefore, in 2020 official voter list, there is 8,831,971 equal to 85.06% of voters allocated to 23,425 polling stations.

Law and procedure do not allow migrant eligible voters (according to informal estimation, there are about 02 million workers) to access registration in foreign countries. In contrast the civil servants and armed force officials of the Government who do not live and have no residence in the commune but have the mission certification in this commune issued by the authority. They used the certificate for the registration.

COMFREL conducted discussions on democracy and election in 10 provinces. The discussion could mainly produce several recommendations. One of them says that it is necessary for the NEC and the Government to have more attention and effort for establishing a legal framework and procedure for eligible voters to get registered in foreign countries.

2. Complaint on Voter Registration and Voter List Update

According to 'NEC's announcement No040, there were 136 complaints during the period of display of the preliminary voter list at the commune. The NEC was found to not make those complaints information more detailed to the public and not conduct the public hearing to resolve those complaints. In contrast, the League for Democracy Party addressed that they had filed 134 complaints to ask for dropping 3,424 voters in total from the list, but they were not informed about the result of complaint resolution.

Regarding the complaints from the bear political party, COMFREL conducted the fact-finding for 49 voter names from 09 villages of 08 provinces. It is found that 12 voters were not confirmed by the village chief, but they were reported by commune officials living in annex village(s). 28 voters were not confirmed as the people of the village, but they were reported as policemen, militaries, members of field visit working groups, and workers who cited the military base or relative's house as their residence. And the rest was not identified, but they were confirmed by the commune clerk and chief to have registered in the list.

ទីស្នាក់ការកណ្តាល ៖ ផ្ទះលេខ ១៣៨ ផ្លូវ ១២២ សង្កាត់ ទឹកល្អក់ ១ ខណ្ឌ ទួលគោក រាជធានីភ្នំពេញ ព្រះរាជាណាចក្រកម្ពុជា

Central Office : #138, Street. 122, Teuk Laak I, Tuol Kork, Phnom Penh, CAMBODIA.

P.O. Box 1145, Phone : (855) 23 884 150 Fax: (855) 23 885 745 E-mail : comfrel@online.com.kh Website: www.comfrel.org

Vision: A democratic society that democratization in particular democratic elections are promoted and qualified to bring benefits to people.

ទស្សនៈវិស័យ ៖ ដើម្បីឱ្យការបោះឆ្នោតមានគុណភាព និងសម្រាប់ការដោយសេរី និងយុត្តិធម៌

3. 2020 Voter List Scrutiny

COMFREL found that among 8,831,947 in the 2020 voter list, there are 79 duplicated voter names (name, ID number, date of birth, and sex are matched). Among the 84 duplicated names, some were with the same type ID or with a different type ID. For instance, some were using the same type III ID, and some duplicated using type III ID and type II ID or type I ID.

Among 84 voter names, 110 of them were duplicated out provinces, 38 in the provinces, 08 in communes, and 12 in the polling station. It is importantly noted that 168 voter names were newly found duplicated among the newly registered voters of the 2020 registration.

Among 79 duplicated voter names, 54 of them are from different provinces, 18 in the same provinces, 03 in the same communes, and 04 in the same polling station.

COMFREL selected 03 voter names of the duplicated names to conduct the verification at Kampot, Banteay Mean Chhey, Kandal, and Siem Reap. Following the verification, COMFREL could conclude that the voters do have two names in the list, or their names were made duplicated. For example, a voter has a name in the voter list of Banteay Mean Chhey, and as well as of Kandal province. It is to conclude that the duplication of voter names resulted from the registration team's failure performance as voters said that they had made a requested to them about their changing address.

The number of duplicated voter names, if compared to 2019, has increased. In 2019, there were only 17 duplicated voter names. COMFREL found that the NEC deleted those duplicated names.

COMFREL found that in the 2020 official voter list, 21,666 voters were found to have the same number of 'voters' registration documents. 20,816 cases are from the number of ID (type I, II,III), and another 850 cases are from the ICR number. It is also noted that in the 2020 official voter list, 8,397,372 voter names are registered with ID, and 434,575 voter names are registered with ICR. According to the finding, it could not conclude that those voter names are duplicated, but they were registered with a duplicated number of registration documents.

Following the scrutiny on the voters' official registration documents¹, among 8,831,947 voter names in the official voter list, 549,152 (equal to 6.2%) voter names were registered with Type I ID, 317,398 (equal to 3.6%) voter names with Type II ID, 7,530,822 (equal to 85.3%) with Type III ID and 434,575 (equal to 4.9%) with ICR. As a result, at least 14.7% of total voter names need to update their official registration documents to ensure those voters' data in accordance with data of Type III ID.

4. Verification on 'Voters' present with their Data in the Official Voter list

COMFREL conduct the interviews/meetings to do voter's verification through selecting data (names) of 1030 voters from the voter list of 103 villages of 11 provinces to or their villagers. 1013 (equal to 98.45%) were met and found to have a residence confirmed by the village chief and their villager as the villages' voters. 10 of them (0.97%) could not be confirmed, but they were found to have their registry documents at communes. And the rest of them could not be confirmed at all. And it is noted that for the verification, COMFREL could meet and do interviews with some bear voters while some were confirmed to COMFREL by their relatives.

COMFREL conducted interviews/meetings with 500 voters who could present their registration documents to verify with data in the voter list. As a result, the registration documents of 429 (equal to 86%) voters are matched with data in the voter list, while others are holding various registration documents if compared to the data in the list.

5. What is Voter List Quality?

There is a question about what the quality of the voter list is. It should be important to note that the accuracy of the voter list should refer to no duplicated names, the correct data of voters, absence of ghost voters in the voter list.

COMFREL conducted verification through interview/meeting with voters as described above and could conclude that 98.45% of voter names, which were selected from 11 provinces to verified, were found as the voters to present at the residence according to data in the voter list. And through Voter List Scrutiny,

¹ type I ID, type II ID, type III ID and Identity certificate for Registration(ICR) that eligible voters present to registration team to get registered in the voter list.

COMFREL found that in the 2020 voter list, 79 voter names have duplicated data. Through interviews/meetings with 500 voters presenting their registration documents to verify with data in the voter list, the registration documents of 429 (equal to 86%) voters are matched. Other 42 (equal to 8.4%) voters are currently holding various registration documents² if compared to the data in the list because voters received updated registration documents after they had registered. Those data/info have not been updated in the voter list. The inspection on registration document number found that 21,666 of total voter names in the 2020 official voter list have been registered with duplicated numbers. At least 1,301,125 (equal 14.7%) of total voter names need updating their official registration documents to ensure that voter data is available only to Type III ID.

COMFREL could conclude that the 2020 official voter list has a good quality and is acceptable in its accuracy. But eligible voters, living in foreign countries still cannot exercise their right to register at the place.

6. Proposed Recommendations

According to 'COMFREL's monitoring and audit on voter registration and the 2020 official voter list, recommendations are proposed as following:

- The controversy between the NEC and the political party should be further resolved through rather technical dialogue and explanation than filing the complaint to the court.
- The NEC should effectively inform the voters who had registered with Type I ID and Type II ID, to update their data in the voter list.
- The NEC should join an effort with MOI to foster the process of issuance ID to all eligible voters and particularly to registered voters who had registered with ICR.
- Every ICR should be issued with a unique number to avoid duplicated ICR numbers.
- The registration team should draw more attention in implementing their tasks, including filling request form and taking a photo of the applicant to minimize the technical fault.
- The NEC should task the registration teams with assistance from the local authority to invite or call for voters whose registration document data is not clear to make verification and correction during the registration period.
- Because the registration in place, which get eligible voters including the member of field visit working, police, and military etc.... whose permanent residence is not situated to the commune of the registration, is found being implemented, the NEC and the Government should consider to also enforce this implementation to migrant eligible voters too.
- The NEC should join an effort with the embassy of Cambodia to establish the registration in place or along the country border. Eligible voters should be able to get registered with either a passport or Khmer ID.

For More information,

Mr. Kim Chhorn	Executive Director of COMFREL	012 942 019
Mr. Korn Savang	Coordinator of Monitoring and Advocacy Unit	011 884 840

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