European Commission
United Nations Development Programme
International IDEA

Electoral ICT and conflict management

Thematic Seminar
Use of ICTs in Electoral Processes

Organized within:

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Causes of election-related violence
(from UNDP's "elections and conflict prevention")

1. **Context**
2. **Processes**
3. **Relationships**
4. **Political factors**
5. **Media**
6. **Corruption**
7. **Security**
8. **Administrative**

- EMBs without adequate capacity, impartiality, transparency
- Inaccurate databases and voter lists
- Weak election operations
- Poor communication between EMB, parties, voters
- Lengthy, unexplained delays in results
- Tabulation not transparent
- Procurement not transparent
- No effective complaints resolution

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"How the election process and administration is designed, managed, and implemented has a strong bearing on electoral violence. Those elections considered free, fair and transparent are less likely to suffer electoral violence than those where allegations of mismanagement or deliberate cheating are prevalent."

(from UNDP's "elections and conflict prevention")

"How the election process and administration is designed, managed, and implemented often reflects contexts, relationships, political factors…etc. <u>The process can very rarely be insulated from other conditions.</u>

Context
Political
Relationships
Corruption
Security

Weak commission
Inaccurate register
Ops problems
(Bad elections)

Electoral violence

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Electoral ICT v. conflict

Administrative flaws as sparks for violence

1. EMBs without adequate capacity, impartiality, transparency
2. Inaccurate databases and voter lists
3. Weak election operations
4. Poor communication between EMB, parties, voters
5. Lengthy, unexplained delays in results
6. Election result tabulation not transparent
7. Procurement not transparent
8. No effective complaints resolution

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Somaliland voter registration

Context

1. Distrust between parties, with regionally-based support
2. Disregard for Constitution, rule of law
3. Weak election commission result of political bickering
4. No accurate population data, with many citizens abroad
5. Perceptions of fraud from previous elections

Voter registration

1. Advisors pressed for paper-based system
2. Commission decided on a high tech VR – cards issued on the spot, finger print scans collected to identify multiple registrants
3. Teams with 2 Ministry of Interior, 2 NEC, 1 each party, 1 appeals court, 2 police
4. Many registrants did not scan fingerprints, or registered using different fingers or other people's finger prints
5. Widespread multiple registration reported
6. Photo insufficient quality for facial recognition

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Somaliland voter registration

Regions in order of registration	Percentage without fingerprints
Saxil	23.81
A	
H	
T	
S	
Sool	71.54

Results

- Voter register not trusted by parties or voters
- Manipulation of data collection entrenched
- Previous voting figures used for election planning
- No in-country technical capacity for managing data
- Ruling party tries to scrap the voter register
- Leading to opposition protests around the country
- MPs fighting in Parliament

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Palestine 2006 and Sierra Leone 2007

Difficult political transitions – ruling party giving up power
Lack of trust between key contenders
History of conflict – many weapons in the country, youth unemployment
Rule of law challenges

= Peaceful, credible elections with results accepted

- Independent, capable, effective election commission, with chief commissioner with integrity trusted by all sides
- Consistent long-term technical advice with a united donor community
- Carefully-managed results process (with electronic tabulation)

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Expectations

ICT with elections can diminish or increase the chance of electoral conflict – mostly depends how it is used. **TRUST, TRANSPARENCY** as well as **EFFICIENCY**. (ICT as multiplier)

How it works depends on the same factors that determine whether or not an election is credible (political culture, EMB competence, integrity).

Considering the trend towards biometrics and other ICT, should be realistic in expectations

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Thank you!

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Questions

1. Do IT upgrades mean more credibility?
2. Can technology compensate for lack of political trust?
3. In a divided society, where difficult to deploy people round the country, can biometrics actually prevent multiple registration?
4. How can ICT be used to increase trust, transparency (not just efficiency) in an electoral process?
5. Should there be a counter to vendors?

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