

prior to their arrival or which they did not observe firsthand, should be reported.

It is usually helpful to review the fourteen areas described in Section B of this Guide (Pre-Election Day Review), and to report on any critical matters - positive or negative - especially those which had a lasting influence on the electoral event.

This can be followed by a description of the group's observation of the voting activities on polling day, including the count. Examples of significant observations made by the members should be provided.

(b) Drawing conclusions

This narrative review of the electoral process will often, in itself, lead to an obvious conclusion as to the group's overall evaluation of the electoral event. While every election has its flaws and problems, in the majority of cases these are not sufficient grounds to reject the whole process. However, there have been instances where elections have been clearly illegitimate. The most difficult evaluations to make involve those elections which fall somewhere between the two extremes. In such cases, the job of the observer is often made even more difficult by pressures from the media and others to render an absolute judgement as to whether the election was "free and fair".

(c) Was the election "free and fair"?

At the outset, observers should avoid the "Trap" of evaluating an electoral event as free and fair on the grounds that all aspects of the voting process went smoothly on polling day, with no evidence of major incidents of fraud, intimidation or disruption. Indeed, before deciding whether an election has been free and fair, a smooth-running polling day must be viewed in the context of the legislative and political environment and of the events preceding as well as following polling day, up to and including the announcement of the official results.

Definitions

In reviewing all of these elements in the context of "free" and "fair" elections, the following definitions are offered for consideration:

"FREE" = an electoral process where fundamental human rights and freedoms are respected, including:

- freedom of speech and expression by the electors, parties, candidates and the media
- freedom of association, that is, freedom to form organizations such as