

6. Protecting free expression during elections. ✓

Canada, through Elections Canada, the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, and any number of NGO's, has long been involved in monitoring and providing technical assistance for the proper conduct of elections in other lands. There is every reason to expect this role to continue, and perhaps even to expand. But it would also be useful to expand the nature of the work involved to include various aspects of free expression related to elections. The International Federation of Journalists, among others, working on the basis of principles laid down by UNESCO and the Council of Europe, has spelled out what this task would entail in their useful Election Reporting Handbook.

It could include several components. One would be public education, to make it absolutely clear that there can be no such thing as a free and fair election without a free press and full freedom of expression. Second, as already implied, journalists can be trained to understand the special role and responsibilities of the media during an election campaign: issues of bias, editorial independence, equal time, and the like. Third, a monitoring function is becoming necessary in elections in a number of emerging nations, where journalists, quite predictably, have been pressured by governments to slant their reporting.

Fourth, and even more ominously, journalists have been subjected in recent years to violence and intimidation during elections in South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria; ironically, the more courageous journalists use the Internet to get the real news out, the more at risk they become. Local journalists, supported by foreign election advisors and monitors, should call upon all political parties and national authorities to declare their support for the safe, unimpeded pursuit by journalists of their craft during elections. In fact the International Federation of Journalists, in their Election Reporting Handbook, has recommended formal guidelines for both governments and media, setting out principles for each that will allow elections to be carried out in the freest, fairest and most informed manner possible.

7. Promoting national sources of news and information.

To Canadians it is an old problem: the determination to have the Canadian story adequately reflected in the media of the day. Many emerging nations are increasingly concerned about the same problem, but whereas Canada has traditionally focussed its attention on so called cultural properties—broadcasting, magazines, films, music and the