



# NABZ-IRAN

**Working to Raise Awareness around Human Rights Violations in Iran**

## **E-Learning Course Citizen Oversight of Elections: How to Get Involved in Elections Beyond Voting**

### **Introduction**

Are you interested in learning how to get involved in the June 2013 presidential elections, aside from voting? Have you seen or heard about election violations in the past and wondered how you could document and report them? If so, this is the course for you. The *Citizen Oversight of Elections: How to Get Involved in Elections beyond Voting* course will help you learn what you can do as a citizen, in addition to voting, to stay active throughout the 2013 presidential election.

This course will give you the tools and knowledge you need to informally engage in election observations before, during and after the presidential elections. Aside from voting, you can add to the demand for improvements in the election process by observing and calling attention to actions that violate the election law, reflect poor administration of the election by authorities, demonstrate questionable conduct of candidates and their supporters, and infringe upon the peaceful election climate.

The course is divided into five lessons:

- Election basics;
- How you can safely participate as an observer of Iran's elections;
- What to observe during the pre-election period;
- What to observe on election day; and
- What to observe after election day.

At the end of each lesson, you can take a short quiz to test what you have learned.

**Take this Course**

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## LESSON 1: ELECTION BASICS

To assess elections objectively, it's important to have a framework for assessing whether the legislation, rules and actions you observe are in line with international principles and standards for democratic elections. This lesson will equip you with this framework.

When you complete this lesson, you will be able to:

- Gauge how elections, if conducted credibly, fit into the overall democratic process;
- Compare international principles of democratic elections to electoral practices in Iran; and,
- Know the key dates of the 2013 presidential election cycle.

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## Elections and the Democratic Process

If conducted democratically, elections give citizens the opportunity to engage directly in their nation, state, or municipality's political process, enabling them to provide direction on the future of their communities. Credible elections are essential to maintaining democratic societies, whereas flawed elections distort citizens' voices and produce outcomes that do not reflect the will of the people.



The principles of genuine democratic elections are recognized in national constitutions around the world, as well as in international human rights declarations. Two of the most well-known declarations are the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#).

Iran has ratified both of these documents and is, therefore, obligated to adhere to their principles. Most notably, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states that, "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." Similarly, Article 6 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran states, "In the Islamic Republic of Iran, national affairs must be administered on the basis of public opinion as expressed through elections, including the election of the President, the representatives of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, and the members of councils, of by means of referenda in matters specified in other articles of this Constitution.

In Iran, the constitution holds the Guardian Council (GC) responsible for upholding elections, and the Ministry of Interior (MOI) is assigned to handle logistics under the GC's supervision. The Guardian Council, which is the authoritative body on interpreting the constitution, publishes the details of how the elections are held in the [Iran's Presidential Election Law](#). Article 9 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran states, "The Guardian Council has the responsibility of supervising the elections of the Assembly of Experts for Leadership, the President of the Republic, the Islamic Consultative Assembly, and the direct recourse to popular opinion and referenda."

We will look further into Iran's domestic electoral processes and laws later in this course.

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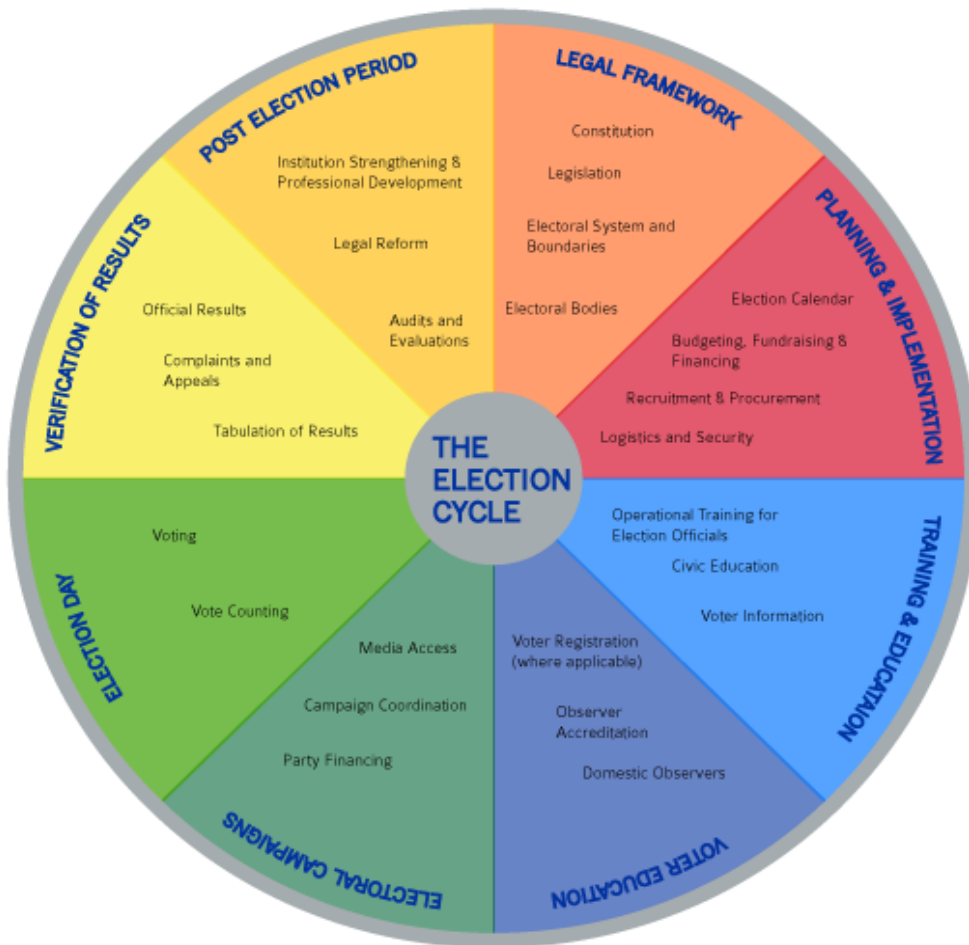
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## Elections Are Not Just “Election Day”

When people think about elections, they mostly focus on voting. While election day is certainly a critical component, it is important to view elections as a long-term “cycle” in which the periods before and after the election equally contribute to the credibility of the process. For example in the pre-election period, if a candidate engages in widespread vote buying or if the election management body fails to educate voters, the overall integrity of the election is compromised.

Additionally, because elections are increasingly subject to international scrutiny, political actors seeking to manipulate election outcomes often carry out violations before or after the voting takes place when fewer eyes are watching. For these reasons and more, it is crucial to watch for violations throughout the entire election cycle.



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**Popup Quiz**

True or False: If no malfeasance is witnessed on election day, the election inherently fair and equitable.

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## Principles of Democratic Elections

Why are some countries' elections broadly considered credible and democratic, while others are not? The principles below, which are based on international declarations, principles and norms, provide a basic framework for assessing whether elections are credible:

- **Transparency.** Electoral activities conducted by candidates, candidates' supporters, government, and the election administration must be conducted in a transparent manner to gain domestic and international confidence. Transparency means, for example, that there are laws and enforcement of those laws requiring candidates to be open about their sources of funding and their campaign expenditures; the election management body clearly and publicly presents and implements its plan and timeline for administering elections; and electoral contestants and election monitors must be permitted to observe all aspects of the process.

### ***Think About It:***

Based on your experience, have elections in Iran adhered to any of these examples of transparency?

- **Inclusiveness.** Inclusiveness is central to the notion that the power of government derives from the will of the people. To be inclusive, elections must ensure the right and opportunity to vote for all eligible voters (universal suffrage). Countries need to assess the barriers to electoral participation for disadvantaged groups, such as women, disabled, and minority voters, and should take measures to overcome those barriers. Inclusiveness also requires that electoral contestants have the right and full opportunity to compete for election. Contestants should be involved in all major parts of the electoral process (including drafting legislation and administering elections), and their input and views should be given due consideration.

### ***Think About It:***

*In your opinion, have previous Iranian elections seemed inclusive?*

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- **Accountability:** Accountability is essential for citizens to be able to assess whether officials are performing their public responsibilities and to be able to hold them answerable for their actions or inactions. Accountability involves several electoral norms, including providing effective remedies to citizens for violations of election-related rights; creating mechanisms (such as public hearings, audits and legislative oversight powers) to hold those organizing elections accountable for their performance; and accounting for those who conduct criminal acts related to the election.

***Think About It:***

*In the past, have those in charge of Iranian elections been held accountable for electoral grievances?*

- **Public Confidence:** Those who seek to be elected lack authority unless it is based on the free expression of the voters' will, and the strength of that authority depends significantly upon whether citizens have confidence in the electoral process. To gain the benefits of public confidence, the government, electoral management body and all electoral competitors should take extra measures to demonstrate to the public that the elections are conducted with integrity and fairness.

***Think About It:***

*How confident are Iranians in their nation's electoral process? Do you believe public expectations for the 2013 race higher or lower than usual?*

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## Comparing Iran's Elections to International Principles

In addition to the broad principles of transparency, inclusiveness, accountability and public confidence, there are a number of more specific conditions and processes that contribute to electoral integrity. When observing elections, it is important to consider how a country's laws and practices compare to international principles for democratic elections. How do past elections in Iran compare to the international principles?

Test your knowledge of electoral conduct in Iran below. For each chart, read the international principles, the relevant section of Iran's Presidential Election Law, and then think about whether the actual practices in Iran correspond to those standards. You also can compare Iran's election law to international principles to assess whether the law adheres to the principles.

AN INFORMED CITIZENRY WITH THE FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION		
<i>International Principles</i>	<i>Iran's Presidential Election Law</i>	<i>Practices in Iran?</i>
Having citizens who are informed and engaged in the election is critical. Citizens have the right to hold political opinions without interference and have the right to freely seek, receive and share information that helps them make decisions about their electoral choices.	Citizens have the right to cast a secret ballot, the right to be educated about the election, and the right to vote free of intimidation, fear or interference.	In your experience, have Iranian voters been able to freely express their political opinions and seek political information (via print news, public events, the internet or social media) free of intimidation?

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## A PEACEFUL AND FAIR CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT

<i>International Principles</i>	<i>Iran's Presidential Election Law</i>	<i>Practices in Iran?</i>
<p>Peaceful and fair campaign periods allow all candidates to have an equal opportunity to seek election. Candidate requirements should be based on reasonable and justifiable criteria.</p> <p>Campaigns should engage in dialogue and debate rather than coercion or intimidation. Citizens should be presented with unbiased information about candidates from the media in order to make a fair decision.</p>	<p>Those wishing to be elected to the presidency must be "a religious person with political interest; must be of Iranian origin and an Iranian citizen; must have the ability of management and leadership; must have a good reputation, trustworthiness and piety; and must be faithful and believe in the foundations of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Islam" (Article 35). Candidates who file applications must be vetted by the Guardian Council to have their candidacy approved. While campaigning, candidates must not slander one another or conduct any activities to unjustly skew the election result.</p>	<p>Do you believe that the candidate requirements of "being a mature leader and manager,...having a good reputation, being trustworthy and pious" are clear and objective according to international standards? Or could the requirements be applied in an inconsistent and unequal manner to different candidates?</p>

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## A SOUND, TRANSPARENT AND IMPARTIAL ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

<i>International Principles</i>	<i>Iran's Presidential Election Law</i>	<i>Practices in Iran?</i>
<p>Elections are logistically challenging and resource-intensive endeavors. In addition, if those managing elections are not impartial, they have can unfairly distort the election results in favor of a particular candidate(s).</p> <p>Thus, having an independent, well-organized, impartial and transparent election management body is essential to the integrity of the process.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Interior (MoI) is largely responsible for administering the election through the establishment of Executive Election Committees, which are responsible for managing the election at both the central and local levels, providing public information on the election, and tabulating the election results.</p> <p>The Guardian Council is responsible for overseeing all phases of the election and has the ability to approve or veto virtually all aspects of the process (Article 8).</p>	<p>Are the MoI and Guardian Council impartial and politically independent bodies? Has their administration of past elections been conducted in a neutral manner?</p>

## AN ACCURATE COUNTING AND TABULATION OF RESULTS

<i>International Principles</i>	<i>Iran's Presidential Election Law</i>	<i>Practices in Iran?</i>
<p>Counting and tabulating the election results is a complex process that often spurs public tension and uncertainty. The election management body should, therefore, ensure that votes are swiftly, accurately, and transparently tabulated.</p>	<p>The election law does not explicitly state the process for counting of votes and tabulation of results. The Central and District Executive Committees are responsible for determining polling station locations and overseeing the election at a local level, however the MoI is the ultimate authority for ensuring the accuracy of the elections (Article 31).</p>	<p>In past elections, have votes been tabulated in a way that promotes confidence in the results? Is the tabulation process fully open and transparent to the public?</p>

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## SOUND AND IMPARTIAL RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

<i>International Principles</i>	<i>Iran's Presidential Election Law</i>	<i>Practices in Iran?</i>
Electoral complaints and disputes should be handled by an independent and impartial authority, decisions should be reached promptly, and procedures should be open and known to the electorate and candidates.	The Executive Committees will process the complaints during the entire pre-election period and two days following the election (Article 80). Executive Committees then present the complaints lodged to the Guardian Council for their opinion, who report it to the Ministry of Interior (Article 79).	What are the relationships between the Executive Committee, MoI and Guardian Council in practice? Are they able to make independent, neutral decisions? Since results are passed upwards through several government bodies, is there an opportunity for selective reporting?

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**Popup Quiz**

What entity administers the election at a polling station?

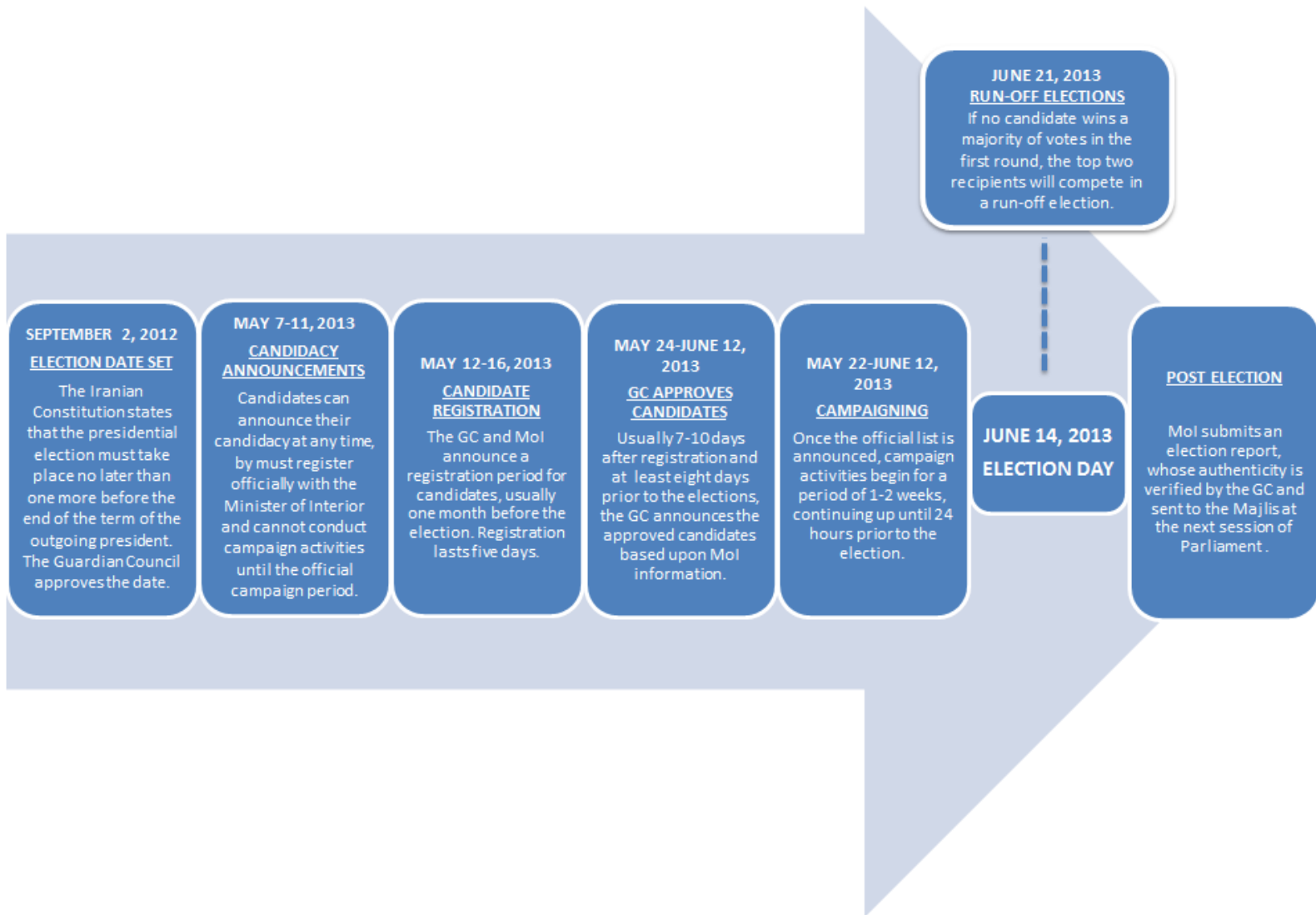
- a. The Guardian Council
- b. The District Executive Committee
- c. Journalists
- d. Clerics

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## Iran's 2013 Presidential Election and Timeline

On June 14th, 2013, Iranians will go to the polls to elect the seventh president of the Islamic Republic. The office of the President of Iran is elected every four years by simple majority vote. This means that one candidate must win 50 percent + 1 of the votes in the first round, or else the top two vote recipients must compete in a runoff within one week of the first election. Below is a timeline of the key points in the 2013 presidential election process.



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## QUIZ

1. What is the most important part of an election to assess whether it is credible?
  - a. Election day
  - b. Campaign period
  - c. Voter registration
  - d. All of the above
2. Which of the following is NOT a core principle of a credible election?
  - a. Inclusiveness
  - b. Transparency
  - c. Speed
  - d. Public Confidence
3. Why is it important to educate citizens about the election?
  - a. So citizens learn how to run for office themselves
  - b. So the election results are more representative of what citizens genuinely want in their leadership
  - c. So voters choose the richest candidate
  - d. So the ruling party stays in office
4. What is NOT an example of transparency?
  - a. The Interior Ministry invites citizens and civil society organizations to comment on the Election Rules and Regulations.
  - b. Election observers are invited to monitor polling stations on election day.
  - c. The governing party invites thousands of people to a campaign event.
  - d. An electoral candidate releases a report of his or her financial income and expenditures.

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## LESSON 2: HOW CAN YOU SAFELY PARTICIPATE AS AN OBSERVER OF IRAN'S ELECTION?

Just as millions of people have done around the world for several decades, you can do more than just vote in the elections -- you can observe and assess them. You can strengthen the demand for improvements to the election process by observing and calling attention to violations. This lesson covers the essential information and tools you need to become more than just a voter.

When you complete this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand how your reports of violations will be used by Nabz Iran;
- Know the types of violations to document and report;
- Understand how to document electoral violations and how to report them through Nabz Iran.

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## How Nabz Iran Can Help You Stay Engaged

Aside from actually voting, watching what is happening around the election is one of the most significant contributions that you can make to the Iranian electoral process. Based on your informed observations, Nabz Iran will be collecting anonymous election reports and publicizing them through a variety of means, including social media and interactive mapping.



The Nabz Iran [reporting form](#) and [Map of Electoral Violations](#) are resources intended to enable you to share securely and anonymously observations and expose any violations you may encounter. As you watch television, listen to the radio, talk to voters and candidate supporters, attend public events, or go to

vote, you should pay attention to the actions of candidates, government bodies, security forces, journalists, political parties, other citizens, and the Ministry of Interior. **Your reports will be critical in drawing attention to flaws and rights violations throughout the Iranian electoral process.**

### *Are violations worth reporting?*

While it may not seem like one person can make a difference by reporting a single incident, every person and every report does matter. Documenting violations you see in the election process calls public attention to problems, which can help bring about improvements in future elections. Citizens who report on electoral issues can make a real difference in how the public and the world view the credibility of an election.

In Russia (<http://www.kartanarusheniy.org/>), Venezuela (<https://testigodigital.crowdmap.com/>) and Georgia (<http://electionsportal.ge/ge/>), groups of citizens that submitted reports had an impact on the domestic and international perceptions of the election, because claims of malfeasance could be backed up by evidence. The more reports collected, the more powerful your voice will be, so encourage your friends, family and others to join the effort.

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**Popup Quiz**

True or False: Reporting violations can be a good way to inform the public's perception of the Iranian presidential election.

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## What to Watch For

The most important things to look for are actions or procedures that create **inequity** in the campaigning and voting environment -- in other words, actions or procedures that create an unfair advantage for one or more of the electoral contestants over the other(s). While many activities by candidates, the government, the Ministry of Interior and other authorities may seem controversial, it is important to pay attention to four primary types of infractions:

1. Violations of the election law,
2. Poor or unequal administration of the election by authorities,
3. Candidate violations during the campaign period and on election day, and
4. Intimidation and coercion of voters.

These four areas will be the primary categories depicted on the [Nabz Iran Map of Electoral Violations](#) which is explained in more depth later in this lesson.

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## ➤ Violation Type 1: Election law

In addition to the rights and principles enshrined in international human rights declarations and Iran's constitution, [Iran's Presidential Election Law](#) provides a guide to how the June 14, 2013 election should function. Violations of the election law are the clearest infractions, as each is explicitly illegal.

We will provide further details on the law a little later, but some examples of illegal activities to watch out for are:

IRANIAN LAW	VIOLATION
<b>No campaigning on election day (Articles 66 and 72)</b>	If you see a candidate making a speech or actively seeking votes after 12:00 am on June 14, it is considered an offense according to Article 66 of the Electoral Law.
<b>No state resources should be used by any candidate for campaign purposes (Article 68)</b>	If a candidate uses a state-led Friday prayer sermon to advocate for his candidacy, it is considered an offense according to Article 65 of the Electoral Law.
<b>Each person is entitled to vote in secret (Article 10)</b>	If at your polling station you are provided unneeded assistance in the voting booth (i.e., an election official looks at your ballot as you are voting), the secrecy of your ballot has been violated according to Article 10 of the Electoral Law.

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➤ *Violation Type 2: How the election is administered*

How the election is administered by the election management body, or in Iran's case the Ministry of Interior and Executive Election Committees, can determine the fairness of the election and, ultimately, the outcome of the vote. While not as obvious as violations of electoral law, an election management body that does not remain neutral in the process can skew the outcome of the election. For example, if a ballot box is not sealed prior to voting or if polling stations run out of ballot papers, particularly in districts where one candidate has stronger support than others, the election result could be unfairly distorted.

➤ *Violation Type 3: Candidate and supporter conduct*

While there are laws that govern candidate and party behavior during elections and campaigns, citizens should pay attention to the activities of those running for political office and their supporters, as their actions can impact the election. Campaigns that incite public anger, use state funds to pay for campaign activities, and disregard other campaign conduct laws can negatively impact the election process. For example, immediately after the 2009 election in Iran, the opposition leader's offices were raided in what appeared to be an act of forceful retribution from the ruling power. Though the election result had already been decided, the conduct of the victorious presidential candidate in the immediate post-election period violated the code of conduct established in the Presidential Election Law.

➤ *Violation Type 4: Violence, intimidation and coercion of voters*

Voters should also be free to select their preferred candidate or party without facing intimidation, coercion or retribution by political actors. Elections characterized by violence and other forms of coercion create widespread inequities in political representation, and they suppress the true voice of the population. The Presidential Election Law specifies that any vote cast under coercion will not be counted and is considered invalid (Article 26-9). Voter intimidation, pressure and manipulation, have been major violations in previous Iranian elections and in many other countries around the world.

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## How to Document Election Violations

There are a number of ways you can collect information about election violations in an objective, impartial and accurate manner. You may directly observe the action; interview witnesses or individuals involved; record photo, audio, or video evidence; and review documents and reports related to the action.

Throughout this course, you will be provided with specific examples of the types of violations and related evidence you can observe and collect. Regardless of the way you collect the information, keep in mind the following questions you should ask yourself when collecting information:

- **Who** was involved in the situation/incident?
- **What** happened?
- **When** did the event occur?
- **Where** did the situation/incident occur? (be as specific as possible)
- **Why** did the situation/incident occur? (based on the evidence you have collected)
- **How** did it happen? What are the details of the situation/incident?

While this course provides basic information about collecting evidence, you can learn much more about documenting violations by taking the Nabz Iran course *Documenting Human Rights Violations in Challenging Environments* which provides you with the knowledge and skills to document human rights abuses (including election violations). That course focuses on how to collect data, evidence and stories and how to report on these with accuracy, impartiality and objectivity. After taking the *Documenting Human Rights Violations* course, you will be well-prepared to collect information through direct observation, interviews and the media; use text, video and audio to document violations; and collect information in challenging and dangerous environments.

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## How to Report Violations and What Happens to Your Report

After you have documented an election violation, you can anonymously report it to the Nabz Iran website by completing a simple [online reporting form](#). The webform will ask you to provide an open-ended summary of the incident, in which city and province the incident took place, and any written, photo or video evidence of the incident (if available).

### Submit a Report

To submit a report, please fill in the reporting form below. Completing the required sections of the form allows for an accurate reflection of the violation being reported — please provide as much information as possible.

Your report will be displayed on the *Nabz-Iran* map and available on the site's portal as soon as it has been reviewed. Reports also can be submitted by email to [report@nabz-iran.com](mailto:report@nabz-iran.com).

Thank you for your contribution and for shedding light on the human rights situation across Iran's cities and provinces.

Title: \*

Date When It Happened: \*

Format: 2013/05/10

Describe What Happened:

All of your reports will feed into an interactive map of the 2013 Iranian election process featured on the homepage of the [Nabz Iran Election Center](#). The map will allow Iranian citizens and internationals to visualize trends in electoral violations, and it will help draw attention to individual regions where the credibility of the 2013 election may be compromised more seriously. Reports also will be promoted on Nabz Iran social media pages, like Facebook and Balatarin, to spread further awareness of the election throughout Iran and internationally. Again, all reports submitted to Nabz Iran via the secure webform are anonymous. You can read more about Nabz Iran's security and privacy policies [here](#).

*Remember, all of your reports are submitted anonymously through a secure site!*

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## QUIZ

1. Why is it important to report election violations?
  - a. To inform public perceptions of the election
  - b. To affect positive change on future electoral processes
  - c. To garner international support for citizens whose rights have been violated
  - d. All of the above
2. What can you do other than voting to participate in the electoral process?
  - a. Pay attention to news reports
  - b. Watch the conduct of officials at your polling station on election day
  - c. Note the conduct and campaigning practices of candidates and their supporters
  - d. All of the above
3. What is the key government document for describing how the election should be administered?
  - a. A political parties code of conduct
  - b. The Constitution
  - c. The Presidential Election Law
  - d. The news agency voting guide
4. Which of these is NOT one of the three core areas that you should pay closest attention to during the electoral period:
  - a. How the election is administered by election officials
  - b. What newspapers in Egypt are saying about the election
  - c. Political party and candidate conduct
  - d. Whether or not any person of force violates a peaceful election environment

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### LESSON 3: WHAT TO OBSERVE DURING THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD

Elections are much more than just an event on election day. To effectively observe elections, it is important that you pay close attention to activities that happen long before election day -- during the pre-election period. If there are significant violations during the pre-election period during such processes as candidate registration, campaigning, media coverage, election preparation and administration, and voter education, the election results could be unfairly pre-determined before voters even have a chance to cast their ballot.

When you complete this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand the major activities that will happen during the period before the 2013 presidential election;
- Know the specific violations to document and report during the pre-election period.

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## What Happens during the Pre-Election Period?

The pre-election period generally consists of electoral procedures development, candidate registration, campaigning, voter education and registration, logistical preparation by election officials for election day, and press coverage of the election. By regulating the media, candidate conduct, and government officials, the election law strives to give each candidate equal opportunity to campaign and be heard.

Look through the following components of the pre-election period and keep them in mind as you assess the period leading up to the June election.

### ✓ *Registration of Candidates*

In free societies, any law-abiding citizen should be able to stand for public office. While there are often nominal requirements, such as a minimum age, set forth in the constitution, requirements should not be open to interpretation and should not unjustly prevent qualified candidates from seeking office. In Iran, candidates must meet eight different requirements set forth in the election law and register their candidacy with the Ministry of Interior. The Guardian Council then interprets the constitutional requirements and decides which applicants are eligible to stand in the presidential election.

During the candidate registration period this year, be mindful of the following rights violations that might arise:

- Arbitrary prohibition of candidates based on reasons that are not consistent with established legislation and procedures; and/or
- Prohibition of a proportionally large number of candidates from a particular party or political community.

### **Applying for Presidential Candidacy in Iran:**

In the 2009 election, nearly 500 applicants registered their presidential candidacy with the Guardian Council. Of those 500, only four were approved to be on the ballot. In your opinion, was this a fair outcome for those seeking to run for president?

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## Campaign Conduct

The campaign period brings about multiple opportunities for inequity. Candidates seeking to engage voters sometimes employ unfair or illegal means with the aim of shifting the election outcome in their favor. To keep tabs on campaign conduct, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) establishes an "Election Campaign Monitoring Commission" (Article 62). In addition to the MoI Commission, it is important to receive independent citizen input on the conduct of presidential campaigns.

When attending campaign events, reading campaign literature, and interacting with candidate representatives, be mindful of the following violations that might unjustly skew the election:

- Vote buying or distribution of goods, cash or benefits in exchange for votes;
- Campaign messages that defame or incite violence against another candidate or their supporters;
- Intimidation of voters or supporters of a particular party or candidate by government forces;
- Tampering with or destroying any legally placed campaign materials or advertisements;
- Government and/or election officials campaigning for a particular candidate; and/or
- Abuse of state resources by incumbent candidates (this issue is explained more in-depth in the next section).

Candidates and their supporters also should not slander or insult other candidates during the campaign (Article 71). While it can be difficult to determine the difference between hard-fought campaign rhetoric and slander, a good rule of thumb to use is whether an attack targets a candidate's personal history or character rather than a proposed policy or position. For example, if one candidate insulted the upbringing or education of another candidate, this would be considered an electoral offense as prescribed by the electoral law.

### Intimidation and Harassment in Zimbabwe



Before and during the 2008 elections in Zimbabwe, election observers from the Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network (ZESN) reported widespread incidents of government security forces wrongfully applying the law to detain political opposition members and to restrict them from holding rallies. Intimidation of voters and opposition supporters increased dramatically during the period before the presidential run-off election. In many locations, opposition supporters were allegedly the targets of violence, as their homes were burned, farms were raided and possessions were looted. Many citizens reported being coerced into attending pro-government rallies, and vendors were instructed to sell only the ruling party candidate's poster and T-shirts. Human rights defenders and election observers were questioned and detained as well.

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## Abuses of Government Resources

A common way incumbent candidates skew the election in their favor is by diverting state resources to help their individual party or campaign. This is a particularly problematic type of abuse, since it gives significant advantage to incumbents. If left unchecked, it can lead to a monopoly of power permanently benefitting one candidate or political force. It is also a form of corruption. In short, abuse of government resources can rig the elections so that those in power always win!

Examples of the prohibited use of state resources in the Presidential Election Law and according to international standards include:

- Use of state vehicles to attend campaign events;
- State-sponsored construction efforts in a given neighborhood or district in the period immediately before elections;
- Posting campaign materials on any state-run educational institutions;
- Enforcing regulations in a way that favors one or more candidates over others;
- Intimidation or harassment of candidates by state law enforcement or security forces;
- Threats that a government worker may lose his/her job or work benefits if they vote for a certain candidate; and/or
- Offering individual voters cash, welfare benefits, university scholarships, or other benefits if they vote for a given candidate.

### Abuse of State Resources in Ukraine:



During the 2010 local elections in Ukraine, observers from the civil society group OPORA reported that government candidates in more than half of the country's territories used state resources to conduct their campaigns. Local executive representatives often used their administrative resources to campaign in favor of different candidates. For example, OPORA observed instances of local authorities providing candidates with cars or instructing their staff to distribute campaign literature and post posters.

If you see any of these things occur during the pre-election period or if you interview victims of such violations, document findings with as much detail as possible, including taking photographs, video, witness interviews, license plate numbers of vehicles, and other relevant documentation. Remember, to learn more about how to collect information and document evidence in an objective yet secure manner, please take the Nabz course on *Documenting Human Rights Violations in Challenging Environments*.

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## Voter Education

To hold a credible election, voter education should be conducted in a comprehensive and inclusive manner. This means that government officials and other public servants should actively, yet impartially, cultivate citizens' knowledge of the electoral process. Leading up to election day, pay attention to the quality of information your community is being offered and who is providing that information. At a minimum, voters should know where they can vote on election day, what documentation they must bring, how to physically cast a ballot, who the candidates are, and why their vote is significant.

Article 45 of the Presidential Election Law states that all polling station locations, voter ID requirements and voting hours must be publicized nine days before the election by the Provincial Executive Committees (in case of any difficulty, the timeframe may be reduced to seven days with the approval of the Ministry of Interior).

The following scenarios demonstrate instances where responsibility to educate voters is NOT upheld and can be reported to Nabz Iran:

- Voter education is only conducted in communities that favor a particular political party or candidate;
- Voters are not given any information on where and how they can vote; and/or
- The tone of government-sponsored voter education favors a specific candidate, such as the ruling party.

For example, if in a voter education exercise the Ministry of Interior distributes sample presidential ballots with the incumbent candidate's name selected, some voters may misunderstand and think they too must make that candidate selection in order to properly cast a ballot.

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## Media Environment

Radio, television, newspapers and the Internet are important mediums that connect candidates' messages to voters, and it is essential that they remain unbiased. Overt and subtle bias in the news media creates an unfair campaign environment and is often perpetrated by the party in power, since it often has greater access to or control of media outlets. Although tough to demonstrate, be mindful of political biases as you watch, read, and listen to coverage of the presidential election.

Potential incidents you may encounter, and can report to Nabz Iran, include:

- State-sponsored television or radio segments that devote substantially more coverage to one candidate over another, particularly when one candidate is portrayed positively and others negatively;
- State-sponsored media sources consistently favoring a particular candidate, particularly the incumbent;
- Suppression of news outlets, internet sites and blogs that tend to favor non-incumbent candidates;
- Disruptions in Internet access making it difficult to attain outside information;
- Pressure on or violence against journalists or bloggers;
- Inflammatory media that incites public anger or violence towards a particular candidate; and/or
- Printed campaign materials for any candidate that do NOT display the name of the document's publishing house, address and date of printing.

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## Election Officials' Preparations

If those managing elections are not impartial and independent, they can unfairly distort the election results in favor of a particular candidate or candidates. Also, given the need for voters to have confidence in the electoral process, it is important that election management bodies are transparent and well-organized. The basic framework for election management in Iran is outlined below, along with some of the specific responsibilities of each management body.

As you read, listen to and watch news in your community, try to closely track whether the election officials are fulfilling their responsibilities. At the same time, think carefully about whether the management of the presidential election follows the principles of impartiality, independence, transparency and competence.

For Iran's 2013 presidential election, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) is largely responsible for administering the election, while the Guardian Council provides broad oversight. According to the Presidential Election Law, the MoI must initiate preparations starting three months before the four-year presidential term expires (Article 3) and is responsible for a variety of duties including:

- Designing a timeline for the election, including candidate registration and timeframes for logistical preparations;
- Drafting the election budget;
- Advising on the drawing of electoral district boundaries;
- Printing and distributing ballot papers; and
- Appointing "Election Executive Committees" at the provincial, district and municipal levels.

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The Election Executive Committees, headed by MoI appointees, are charged with administering the election at the local level in each of Iran's 30 provinces (made up of 330 counties and 669 districts). Executive Committee members are chosen in a top-down fashion, with the MoI choosing representatives of the Provincial Committees, Provincial Committee members selecting District-level members, and so on.

Executive Committees are in charge of many important electoral tasks, including:

- Deciding the locations of polling stations, with approval from the Guardian Council;
- Educating the public about the election, including the election date, polling station locations, voting hours and voter requirements;
- Adjudicating election complaints; and
- Appointing individual polling station teams, comprised of one chief, a deputy, and three secretaries (one polling station team member is also appointed by the Governor of each county, bringing the total to six staff).

In addition to the MoI and Executive Committees, the Guardian Council possesses extensive oversight powers throughout the electoral process. The Council has the power to:

- Approve amendments to electoral law;
- Approve the date of the election;
- Vet and approve all presidential candidates;
- Supervise the Election Campaign Monitoring Committee, which oversees candidate conduct during the campaign period;
- Adjudicate electoral disputes alongside the Executive Committees;
- Judge the validity of the election process in particular polling stations or districts, with the power of halting the voting process or invalidating votes from polling stations in question; and
- Certify the final results.

One major change to the electoral law ahead of the 2013 presidential race is the creation of the Central Executive Board (CEB) – a body that will oversee the MoI's election management activities. Whereas historically the Ministry was the sole government entity mandated with managing elections, the CEB now involves other government actors and designated public leaders in the electoral process. The Board is composed of the Minister of the Interior, the Attorney General, the Minister of Information, and seven Public Trustees (generally made up of religious, political, cultural, and social figures).

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## QUIZ

1. Which of the following is a violation you might report when paying attention to election news coverage?
  - a. The state-owned television channel airs a presidential candidate debate.
  - b. A newspaper prints a front page article calling on citizens to riot outside a political party's headquarters.
  - c. A radio station plays a campaign advertisement by the opposition party.
  - d. An online blog publishes a profile for each presidential candidate on the ballot.
2. What is NOT an appropriate government activity in the pre-election period?
  - a. Educating voters
  - b. Printing campaign flyers at government facilities.
  - c. The President signs legislation assisting disabled voters gain access to polling stations on election day.
  - d. Attending campaign events.
3. You are at a campaign event sponsored by the incumbent candidate. Which of the following occurrences is a violation you could report:
  - a. The candidate is distributing literature that negatively portrays the opposition.
  - b. The candidate hands out sacks of rice at the event.
  - c. Audience members begin to riot.
  - d. Answers B & C are both correct.
4. Who is ultimately responsible for approving the election results?
  - a. The Ministry of Interior
  - b. The Guardian Council
  - c. The Executive Committees
  - d. All of the above
5. True or false: The Ministry of Interior conducts a large voter education campaign in Iran's urban centers. This means that the right of all citizens to be educated about the election is being upheld.
  - a. True
  - b. False

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## LESSON 4: WHAT TO OBSERVE ON ELECTION DAY

As you observe the overall electoral process, election day will provide the opportunity to see the most “action.” This lesson provides an overview of the different activities you’ll have the opportunity to observe, particularly in and around polling stations. It also discusses the differences between the types of violations you may see, and how to distinguish major violations from minor ones.

When you complete this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand the major activities that will happen on election day (June 14);
- Know the specific violations to document and report on election day.

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## What Should Happen?

June 14th will be an exciting and challenging day for the Interior Ministry, candidates and voters alike. Those in charge of managing the election must take a number of steps to ensure that the process is administered fairly, efficiently, and transparently.

Listed below are some of the key processes that happen on election day:

✓ *Election management*

Before the start of voting, the polling station officers must check if all ballot boxes are empty and then seal the boxes (Article 29). Officers must also ensure that they are equipped with sufficient ballot papers and other election materials, so that all citizens who turn out will be able to cast a vote. Additionally, the polling station must be set up in a manner that allows Iranians to cast secret ballots (Article 10).

✓ *Candidate activity*

For candidates, election day is the time when all campaigning must cease. Candidates and their supporters must remove all public campaign materials the day before the election, and they may not engage in any political activity in polling stations (Article 72). Candidates are, however, permitted to send accredited representatives to observe voting inside polling stations, provided they give a list of names to the polling station officials five days in advance ([Law on the Presence of Candidate Agents in Polling Stations, 2000](#)).

✓ *Voting*

Citizens seeking to vote on election day will be responsible for bringing their national identification card, or *shenasnameh*, in order to cast a ballot. The polling station officers will examine your ID booklet to ensure you meet the legal voting requirements and to check if you already possess the unique election stamp. All eligible citizens with their *shenasnamehs*, who have not already voted, should be able to cast a ballot without facing any discrimination or unnecessary hassle.

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### What to Look for While Voting?

As you and fellow Iranians go to the polls on June 14th, be mindful of a number of incidents you may encounter that could undermine the rights of citizens and negatively impact the credibility of the election. These incidents may involve the Interior Ministry, polling station officials, political party supporters, or everyday citizens.

#### ❖ *Illegal Campaigning*

Candidates actively campaigning on election day create an unfair advantage in the election. If you see any candidates conducting campaign activities on election day, such as rallies or speeches, collect information on which party and estimate the number of citizens who attend. Additionally, any campaign materials posted in a polling station clearly violate the election law and international standards.

#### ❖ *Secrecy of the Ballot*

Polling stations that are not arranged in a manner that allows for secrecy of the vote can disenfranchise citizens who fear political retribution for choosing their true preferred candidate. While inside the polling station, assess whether or not you feel able to cast a vote secretly and whether or not other citizens' privacy is respected. Also be sure to watch for any incidents of "family voting," in which husbands and wives or other family members enter poll booths together. Family voting often results in female disenfranchisement, as women face pressure from their partners to vote a certain way.

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## ❖ *Voter identification Issues*

Confusion and manipulation surrounding voter identification often results in disenfranchisement on election day. While waiting to vote, watch for any incidents in which voters present a *shenasnameh*, and perhaps also a National Card, but are nevertheless turned away by polling officers. Your reports might reflect a single incident or they may reveal a more systematic effort to disenfranchise a particular community of voters. Also be mindful of how many voters in your polling station are uninformed about the documents needed to cast a ballot or about the physical process of casting a ballot. Widespread confusion could indicate poor voter education.

## ❖ *Accessibility of Polling Stations*

It is quite normal for voters to have to wait in moderate lines on election day, but you can report any incidents where voters must wait in line for more than an hour. Excessively long lines often result in disenfranchisement of disabled or elderly voters, which may reflect disorganization on the part of the Interior Ministry. You may also report if your polling station is located in a highly inaccessible place, making it difficult for you and your family and friends to vote.

## **Popup Quiz**

Which of the following is NOT something that you should be vigilantly watching out for at your polling station?

- A. Whether polling stations are accessible for elderly voters
- B. Whether voters who are eligible to vote are turned away and not allowed to vote
- C. Whether voters are able to cast their ballot in secret
- D. Two voters are arguing in line but resolve the problem within a few minutes

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## What to Look for While Voting (continued)?

Keep in mind that you will only be able to observe some of these events for the short period of time you are inside or around the polling station, so be sure to stay alert as you vote.

### Monitoring the Polls in Iran



In the June 2009 election, a number of accredited Iranian opposition observers were turned away from polling stations, and were therefore unable to monitor the voting and counting processes. This incident represents a violation of the Law on the Presence of Candidate Agents in Polling Stations, 2000, and of international standards.

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## What are the More Serious Election Day Violations and Why?

In addition to the incidents mentioned in the previous section, you might encounter a number of critical violations on election day with the potential to gravely impact the outcome and integrity of the election. Any of the incidents below can be reported to Nabz Iran with as much detail and evidence as possible, as each example could result in widespread disenfranchisement of Iranian citizens.



### BALLOT BOX STUFFING

If you see one person submitting more than one ballot in the ballot box, this is a serious violation that is punishable by law under Article 33 of the Presidential Election Law. Widespread ballot box stuffing can seriously affect the outcome of the election in favor of one candidate - ultimately undermining the will of the Iranian people. If you witness any occurrences of ballot box stuffing or tampering, report your polling station location, who was involved in the offense, and what action was (or was not) taken to address the issue.



### RESTRICTIONS OF VOTER RIGHTS

As previously mentioned, any incident in which a voter was unlawfully prevented from casting a ballot is a serious infraction of his or her political rights. If you notice multiple incidents in which voters' rights are restricted, report these incidents to Nabz Iran, as this could indicate either poorly-trained election officials or a larger pattern of purposeful disenfranchisement of certain types of voters.



### RESTRICTIONS OF OBSERVER RIGHTS

Accredited candidate representatives seeking to observe the election must be allowed inside polling stations according to Iranian law and international standards. By peacefully observing the voting process, candidate representatives are protecting their candidate's right to be elected and deterring any malfeasance that might negatively affect the election outcome. If you see any accredited representatives (likely those carrying official badges or name tags) who are prevented from entering the polling station, it could be an indication that fraud is taking place inside the polling station.

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## VOTE BUYING

Vote buying, which is the distribution of goods, cash or services in exchange for votes, can take place in both the pre-election period and on election day itself. As you venture around your town or village on election day and as you vote in your polling station, watch for any political agents that may be distributing goods or cash to encourage citizens to vote for or against a particular candidate. Gather as much evidence of the incident as you can, including taking photos or video if possible.



## CHAOS IN THE POLLING STATION

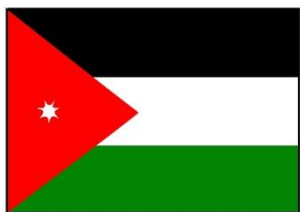
Any incidents of overcrowding, fighting, rioting or chaos inside or near a polling station should be reported, along with details of the incident and photos or video evidence if possible. Chaos on election day prevents election officials from effectively administering the election and can deter voters from casting their ballots.



## VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION

Any incidents of violence or intimidation that occur on election day, and may be politically motivated, can be reported to Nabz Iran with as much detail as possible. This could include any protests or riots that break out in your community, incidents of security personnel using excessive force on citizens, or any other suspected effort to systematically coerce citizens to vote certain way on election day.

### Vote Buying in Jordan



During Jordan's 2010 parliamentary elections, the Civil Coalition RASED, along with international observers, observed numerous cases of vote buying before elections and on election day. In some cases, candidate's staff members signed false employment contracts with voters with the intention of securing their votes through the transfer of money. In other more obvious cases, voters showed their votes to candidate supporters in the polling station to receive money. These problems occurred despite the introduction of stricter penalties for election fraud, including vote buying, and the government's investigations into a number of alleged cases during the campaign period.

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## QUIZ

1. You are waiting in line at a polling station and witness the following scenarios. Which situation could be considered a violation of voters' rights or an incident of fraud that you could report to Nabz?
  - a. A 16-year old presents his identification to the polling officer and is turned away.
  - b. A voter says he forgot his identification but is permitted to vote anyway.
  - c. Voters must wait in line for 20 minutes before casting their ballots.
  - d. A husband waits outside of the poll booth for his wife to cast her ballot.
2. What activity are candidates permitted to do on election day?
  - a. Hold a campaign event in a town center
  - b. Assign agents to observe the voting and counting processes in polling stations
  - c. Distribute campaign materials in the polling stations
  - d. None of the above
3. What would be considered an election day violation by the Election Executive Committees?
  - a. The polling station runs out of ballots.
  - b. An election officer forgets to mark a voter's ID card with the unique 2013 election stamp.
  - c. An election officer refuses to let a candidate agent inside the polling station.
  - d. All of the above
4. What do polling officers need before the voting can begin?
  - a. Ballot papers
  - b. A camera
  - c. A list of convicted criminals who live in the electoral precinct
  - d. All of the above
5. If an accredited candidate agent seeking to observe the election is not allowed to enter the polling station, what might this be an indication of?
  - a. Poorly trained election officials
  - b. Fraudulent activity occurring inside the polling station
  - c. Corrupt election officials
  - d. All of the above

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## LESSON 5: WHAT TO OBSERVE AFTER ELECTION DAY

Elections are far from over when the voting ends. This lesson will prepare you to observe and report on any violations that occur in the post-election period.

When you complete this lesson, you will be able to:

- Understand the major activities that will or could happen after election day;
- Know the specific violations to document and report during the post-election period.

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### **What Happens During the Post-Election Period?**

After the polls close on June 14th, a series of post-election processes will begin to finalize the result. At this point, you can pay close attention to ballot counting, results tabulation, consideration of electoral disputes, the official certification of the election results, and public reactions to the result.

In countries with elections that meet international principles and standards for democratic elections, the primary goals of the post-election period are to ensure that:

- The will of the voters is accurately and transparently counted, recorded and reflected in the official results; and
- Complaints or appeals filed by candidates, candidates' agents and voters are duly considered and adjudicated in a fair, independent manner.

As you observe the post-election period, you can consider whether the post-election activities in Iran meet these goals or whether they fall short. More specifically, there are a number of electoral violations you can watch out for as the post-election stage unfolds, which are detailed in this lesson.

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## Results Tabulation and Announcement of Outcome

As mentioned previously, the tabulation and announcement of results can only be considered credible if the will of the voters is accurately and transparently counted, recorded and reflected in the official results. Though it is unlikely that you will be able to directly observe the counting and tabulation of the election results, it is important to have a general understanding of how this process is conducted in Iran.

Polling station officers begin by counting the number of “ballot stubs” and comparing that to the number of votes in the ballot box. If there are a higher number of ballots than stubs, a random sample of votes are selected from the ballot box and canceled to account for the discrepancy. If the stub and ballot count are equal (or if there are more stubs than ballots) the count proceeds.

After all votes are counted, the results are certified, the ballots are returned to the ballot box, the box is resealed, and the votes are sent to the Executive Committee (*source: IFES*). After the full tabulation process, the Guardian Council has a maximum of 10 days to give its final opinion about the election results to the Ministry of Interior (Article 79). The MoI then announces the official results via mass media to the Iranian people.

While these procedures are underway, here are a few considerations to keep in mind:

- Are the results tabulated and reported to Iranians within a reasonable time frame?
  - *For example during Iran's 2009 presidential election, the Ministry of Interior announced the results almost immediately after the polls closed, adding to suspicions that a legitimate vote count was not conducted.*
- If you are able to speak with candidate agents, were they able to observe the tabulation of results?
- Are news sources reporting any disputes within the Executive Committees regarding the counting of the ballots or results tabulation?
- Were there allegations of results being tampered with in the news or among witnesses you have spoken to?

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## Resolution of Election Challenges and Disputes

According to the international principles and standards for democratic elections, any challenges, complaints and disputes by candidates and voters should be duly considered and adjudicated in a fair, independent manner. Throughout the post-election period, the Executive Committees and Guardian Council must also work to resolve any legal electoral disputes or challenges that citizens and/or candidates might file.

In Iran, complaints may be processed up until two days after the election results are announced. Within 24 hours of receiving a complaint, the relevant Executive Committee and Guardian Council will meet jointly to discuss the dispute and report their decision to the Ministry of Interior (Article 80). Complaints related to the way elections are administered may be submitted to the Guardian Council supervisors or their registrar within three days after the polls (June 17th).

If the Executive Committee and Guardian Council deem that elections were not properly administered in a given polling station, the votes from that station will be pronounced void. In addition to upholding the processes set forth in the electoral law, it is crucial that the resolution of disputes is conducted in a legitimate, transparent, credible and politically neutral manner.

Here are some considerations to take into account while the disputes resolution process is underway:

- Are the Executive Committee and Guardian Council objective, neutral and independent bodies that have the capability to resolve complaints and appeals fairly and objectively?
- In talking to voters and candidate supporters, did any report that they attempted to file complaints? If so, were they able to file complaints, and have the complaints been adjudicated within 24 hours?
- Were the complaint resolutions announced publicly over mass media?
- If any polling stations' votes were declared void, were they located in the strongholds of a particular candidate, potentially affecting the overall election result?
- In your conversations with voters and candidate supporters, have you noticed any patterns in the types of electoral disputes filed (ex. widespread disputes of poor election administration, multiple violations of ballot secrecy)?

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## Popup Quiz

What is the organization citizens can file official complaints with on election day

- A. The Executive Committee
- B. Parliament
- C. The National Security Council
- D. The Expediency Council

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## Reactions to the Results

Elections lacking broad stakeholder confidence have the potential to spark widespread dissatisfaction, disillusionment, and anger. In a number of countries, including Kenya (2007), Cote d'Ivoire (2010), and Iran (2009), public protests, riots, and systematic violence have all taken shape in the wake of a disputed election. For an election to be viewed as credible and for a peaceful transfer (or reassertion) of political power to take place, citizens, the government, candidates and their supporters, and the international community should be able to peacefully accept the result. If one or more of these groups does not view the outcome as legitimate, the potential for post-election tension and violence becomes increasingly high.

Sharing information on the reactions to this year's election result will help spread international awareness of any potential tension or danger that may spread, and it will help shine a spotlight on perpetrators of malfeasant post-election activities.

In the event of any protests, riots or rallies in your community (or in the news), here are several ways you might gather information, which can be reported through Nabz Iran:

- Document where and when the protest is taking place;
- Note the political affiliation (if any) and age demographic of the protesters;
- Estimate how many people are involved;
- Gauge the degree to which the protest is peaceful or violent; and/or
- Report if there is any backlash or forceful crackdown from an opposing political group or government forces.

### Post-Election Violence in Kenya



The result of Kenya's 2007 presidential election triggered an unprecedented wave of violence, leaving approximately 1,300 people dead and 650,000 displaced from their homes. The hotly contested election was marred with allegations of fraud by both major political parties, and tensions boiled over during the post-election period. The tragic events surrounding the Kenyan election are inherently ingrained in the country's political memory to this day.

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## QUIZ

1. Are candidate representatives allowed to watch election officials count the ballots? Yes/No.
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. The MoI and Guardian Council have just declared the votes from your polling station void. Which of the following is NOT a legitimate reason for such a pronouncement?
  - a. The votes were voided because there was proof of excessive ballot box stuffing in the polling station.
  - b. The votes were voided because not enough voters turned out in that polling station.
  - c. The votes were voided because a candidate was distributing cash outside of the polling station.
3. If you witness a protest after the election results have been announced, which is NOT a step you would take to gather information for a Nabz Iran report?
  - a. Determine whether the protesters are supporters of a particular candidate by listening to their chants or reading their signs.
  - b. Estimate the number of people participating.
  - c. Join the protest yourself to assess what the situation is like on the ground.
  - d. Estimate the age and gender demographics of the protestors.

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## Conclusion

Congratulations on completing the Nabz Iran Citizen Oversight of Elections course! You are now well equipped to get engaged in the 2013 election and to do your part in pushing for improvements to the electoral process. As the election cycle moves forward, the information you gather and report will be critical in drawing attention to electoral violations around the country.

For each period of the electoral process (pre-election, election day and post-election), you can use the corresponding lesson in this course as a guide for knowing what to watch out for and how to determine if it is a violation or not. When you report a violation, try to collect as much evidence (photos, video, audio recording) and as many facts as you can to strengthen the credibility of your report. Seek to answer the questions of how, what, when, where, why and how. Then use the simple, anonymous [reporting form](#) to report any violations you observe and make your voice heard. The [Map of Electoral Violations](#) will highlight violations for fellow Iranian citizens and the world.

Remember, by anonymously reporting violations through Nabz Iran, you're doing your part to inform public perceptions of how the election is being conducted and to demand positive change in future electoral processes so they can be more democratic.

*Please note that you may re-enter this course at any time in case you need to review any of the material.*

## QUIZ ANSWERS

### Popup Quiz #1

True or False: If no malfeasance is witnessed on election day, the election inherently fair and equitable.

False. While it's a good sign that no malfeasance is witnessed on election day, it doesn't necessarily mean that the election is completely fair. Interference with a free election could occur at various stages of the election cycle, sometimes long before or after election day. Determining the overall quality of the process involves witnessing what happens all throughout the election cycle from the registration of candidates, to campaigning, to election day, to the resolution of complaints.

### Popup Quiz #2

What entity administers the election at a polling station?

Chapter 4 of the Presidential Election Law discusses the roles of the Executive Committees in administering the election. District Executive Committees are established at the lowest level of administration, and are therefore in charge of managing polling stations in Iran.

### Lesson One Quiz

1. D. All of the above. All of the above components contribute to electoral integrity and are worth assessing, if possible.
2. C. Speed. Speed is not a standard principle for credible elections. While speed and efficiency can be seen as assets in certain regards, such as the speedy announcement of results, it is better to ensure that an election is administered carefully.
3. B. So the election results are more representative of what citizens genuinely want in their leadership. It is important to present voters with accurate and impartial information on the election so they may make informed political choices that will benefit their families and communities.
4. C. The governing party invites thousands of people to campaign events. A large-scale campaign event would not be an indicator of transparency, because it would not typically provide voters with unbiased information on the election process.

### Popup Quiz #3

True or False: Reporting violations can be a good way to inform the public's perception of the Iranian presidential election.

True. What you report, when combined with other citizens' observations, can present a snapshot of the election and inform the public as to whether or not the results should be seen as representative and credible. In many countries around the world, reports of malfeasance and violations of the election law have informed and changed the way that the public and international community have viewed elections.

## Lesson Two Quiz

- 1) D. All of the above. Reporting violations will broadly benefit the Iranian electoral process in the short- and long-term, since you are helping to inform the Iranian public and the international community about the challenges and issues that need to be addressed.
- 2) D. All of the Above . Remember, there are many ways that citizens can get involved throughout the electoral process. Each contribution is important
- 3) C. The Presidential Election Law. While the Constitution outlines broad principles and rights related to elections, the Presidential Election Law is the most important guiding document for election administrators, candidates and citizens. It's also important to remember that - as detailed in the previous lesson - there are global principles and standards for conducting democratic elections in human rights declarations and other documents, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- 4) B. What newspapers in Egypt are saying about the election. Though it is useful to seek out and read/watch/listen to international viewpoints on how the Iranian political and electoral processes are being conducted, paying attention to what is actually happening in Iran will be the best and most direct way to observe and assess the process.

## Lesson Three Quiz

1. B. A newspaper prints a front page article calling on citizens to riot outside a political party's headquarter. Anything in the media that incites chaos or violence, particularly against a specific candidate is an electoral offense. Choices A, C and D merely describe instances where the media publishes political content, but not necessarily in an unfairly biased manner.
2. B. Printing campaign flyers at government facilities. Printing campaign flyers at a government office building would constitute an abuse of state resources, as all government printers, ink and paper technically belong to the Iranian people. It is illegal to use such public materials for private, political gain.
3. D. Answers B & C are both correct. Answer A could only be considered an electoral offense if one candidate is blatantly slandering another in campaign literature. Otherwise it is to be expected that candidates would portray their opposers in a tempered negative light.
4. B. The Guardian Council. The Guardian Council has the sole authority to certify the election result according to Article 79 of the Presidential Election Law. While the Ministry of Interior and Executive Committees have roles in facilitating the election and counting the ballots, they cannot approve the official results.
5. B. False. If the Ministry of Interior concentrates all of its efforts on urban areas in Iran, rural voters will be left behind. Conducting large voter education campaigns is great, however, the effort must be diversified so that all citizens are given equal access to information about the election.

## Popup Quiz #4

Which of the following is NOT something that you should be vigilantly watching out for at your polling station?

D. While an argument between voters may seem like a tense situation worth reporting, it does not affect the credibility of the election unless, for example, it turns into violence in or near the polling station and/or affects other citizens' abilities to vote. Choices A, B and C are all important procedural factors to observe carefully.

## Lesson Four Quiz

- 1) B. A voters says he forgot his identification but is permitted to vote anyway. Being allowed to vote without showing the appropriate identification can be equally detrimental to an election as being denied the vote when you have proper ID. This could allow citizens to cast multiple ballots and unfairly sway the outcome of the election. Answer A. is not correct, since a 16 year old does not meet the minimum vote-eligible age requirement of 18. Answer C is not a violation, since moderate lines of 20 minutes would not cause disenfranchisement of voters.
- 2) B. Assign agents to observe the voting and counting processes in polling station. According to the 2000 Law on the Presence of Candidate Agents in Polling Stations, candidates and their supporters may peacefully observe the voting process inside polling stations. All political campaign activity is prohibited on election day, however.
- 3) D. All of the above. Answers A, B and C all describe electoral violations. Though some of these violations may seem quite minor and may be simple accidents by election officers, all have the potential to disenfranchise voters and unfairly impact the election result. For example, running out of ballots could prevent or prohibit numerous citizens from voting, and failing to stamp a voter's ID card could allow him/her to cast multiple ballots. Preventing candidate agents from observing denies their right to monitor whether their candidate's supporters are able to cast their ballots fairly and freely. If you observe any of these incidents, you could report them to Nabz.
- 4) A. Ballot papers. Ballots are essential for voting. Voting should be a simple, safe and secret exercise. Devices like cameras could be used to compromise the secrecy of the ballot. Convicted criminals are eligible to vote, so a list of them is not necessary.
- 5) D. All of the above. The above incident could be caused by a range of factors, which may or may not indicate a systematic, intentional effort to sway the election results. For any incident you witness, it is important to report it objectively by gathering the facts about the incident. Seek to answer who, what, when, where, why and how -- which were outlined in Lesson 2.

## Popup Quiz #5

What is the organization citizens can file official complaints with on election day?

- A. The Executive Committee. The Presidential Election Law designates the Executive Committees as the authority that accepts electoral complaints. Articles 78-83 describe the overall processes of dispute resolution, in which the Executive Committees and Guardian Council jointly decide the outcome.

## Lesson Five Quiz

- 1) A. Yes. The right to observe the counting of the ballots is stipulated in the Law on the Presence of Candidate Agents in Polling Stations, 2000.
- 2) B. Even in the smallest polling station or polling stations with the lowest turnout, every vote and voter counts. Votes from entire polling stations only can be voided by election authorities where significant electoral manipulation has been proven to have been carried out.
- 3) C. Though it is important to gather as much information as possible, you should never jeopardize your own safety. Elections are particularly contentious events, so remember to be guarded and vigilant when gathering information.