



Frequently Asked Questions

Accreditation of Election Observers

Nominated by Foreign Embassies, Consulates and other Diplomatic Missions by the Union Election Commission of Myanmar

Accreditation for International Observers, including election observers nominated by foreign embassies, consulates and other Diplomatic Missions to the Union of Myanmar, has been officially launched on June 26th 2015 by the Union Election Commission (UEC). Accreditation procedures, as well as international observers' rights and obligations are covered in the Procedures for International Election Observers in Observing the Hluttaw Elections (Notification 7/2015) and in the Code of Conduct for International Observers issued on March 19, 2015 (Notification 2/2015).

1. I am interested to observe the upcoming Myanmar elections. Can I apply individually to be Election Observer during Myanmar 2015 General Elections?

The UEC accreditation system for the 2015 General Elections is based on organizations' accreditation. Only organizations can apply to nominate International Observers, not individuals.

Embassies, Consulates and other Diplomatic Missions to the Union of Myanmar can nominate observers following the specific procedures established to that end and explained in this FAQ. Individuals willing to be international observers should contact an International Observation Organization accredited by the Union Election Commission. Staff of the International Electoral Assistance Providers supporting UEC will be directly contacted.

2. Which foreign countries can nominate election observers?

All Diplomatic Missions to the Union of Myanmar that have received an invitation to observe the elections by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar can nominate election observers with the UEC.

3. *When can Diplomatic Missions nominate election observers?*

Diplomatic Missions can request the accreditation of election observers after receiving an invitation to observe the election from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar. Requests can be submitted until 15 days before Election Day (on or before October 24th, 2015, 17:00hs).

4. *Can a Diplomatic Mission request accreditation of their temporary staff visiting Myanmar at the occasion of the elections and of their national staff?*

Yes, Diplomatic Missions may request accreditation of temporary staff (“surge staff”) and national staff by including them in the list of nominated observers.

It will be the sole responsibility of the applying Diplomatic Mission to ensure that all their Observers are properly informed about the Observers’ rights and duties and the Observer’s Code of Conduct and that they comply with the Union of Myanmar’s election laws, regulations and procedures.

5. *Where can Diplomatic Missions submit their Request for Accreditation and their List(s) of Observers?*

Duly completed applications can be submitted through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw. After submitting their applications and other accompanying documents to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw, the Diplomatic Missions shall submit copy of their applications and accompanying documents for information to the Union Election Commission at info@uec.gov.mm. The Union Election Commission shall then proceed to scrutinize the documents thus submitted after vetting of the Requests for Accreditation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

6. *For how long will election observers nominated by foreign embassies, consulates and other Diplomatic Missions be accredited?*

Election observers nominated by foreign embassies, consulates and other Diplomatic Missions will be accredited for short-term observation (STO) for a period of 10 continuous days inclusive of Election Day (E-Day).

Diplomatic missions can specify the 10-day period during which they expect their STOs to observe in the “mission statement of the election observer group” to be attached to their application (see Question 7).

The 10 continuous day period of accreditation proposed by the Diplomatic Mission in its mission statement shall include the E-Day itself.

Based on operational constraints and coverage needs, the UEC will reserve the right to accredit the observers for another 10-day period than the one requested, which would also include the E-Day.

7. Which documents shall Diplomatic Missions submit to request accreditation?

In submitting their application through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Diplomatic Mission to the Union of Myanmar shall provide the following documents:

- a. A duly completed and signed Request Form for Accreditation of Election Observation Organization (Annex A of the Procedures for International Election Observers), in English. A word version of the Request Form can be downloaded from the UEC website – please note that the following category of the form do not apply to Diplomatic Accreditation requests: #9 (sources of funds).
- b. A mission statement specifying the phase(s) of the electoral cycle that the Diplomatic Mission intends to observe
- c. A copy of the Invitation to Observe letter received from the Union of Myanmar’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- d. A list of nominated observers (second page of Annex A of the Procedures for International Election Observers in Observing the Hluttaw Elections) signed by the Head of Mission / Ambassador / Charge d’Affaires, including the name, passport number (as well as diplomatic passport when applicable) and nationality of each observer clearly written or typed; the template can be downloaded from the UEC website.
- e. Signed observer pledges (annex E of the Procedures for International Election Observers in Observing the Hluttaw Elections); the template can be downloaded from the UEC website.
- f. A USB Key (for application submitted in person at the UEC) or a ZIP file attached to an email (for application submitted by email) including a digital passport-sized picture of each observer listed, in JPEG format, high resolution (minimum number of pixels: 200 – preferred number of pixels: 400), on a clear background, with each picture file named following a “*First Name_Family Name.jpg*” format.

8. When shall Diplomatic Missions expect a reply to Accreditation Request?

The UEC shall respond within seven days after completing the scrutiny of complete applications (the scrutiny shall take three days from the moment of receipt). If any missing documentation, the UEC shall

notify the Diplomatic Mission a request to complete the application with any missing documentation within five days after receiving the notification email or letter from UEC.

9. How will UEC scrutinize list of observers nominated by Diplomatic Missions?

Upon receipt of a list of nominated observers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the UEC will:

- a. Scrutinize if the list of nominated Diplomatic Observers contains at least the names, passport number and nationality of each observer.
- b. Establish if all nominated observers have signed the Observer Pledge.
- c. Vet (by stamping it) the Observation Organization's list of observers and provide it by email/post to the contact person of the organization and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to support visa applications of observers coming from abroad; Enter the following information into the database for each observer: date, name, nationality, passport number, organization name, period of validity.
- d. Issue one observer ID card set (laminated observer ID card and lanyard) for each submitted pledge;
- e. Contact the contact person of the Diplomatic Mission mentioned on the accreditation request to invite the organization to collect the cards;
- f. Handover the cards to the Diplomatic Mission.

10. Shall Diplomatic Missions submit their full lists of observers together with their Accreditation Request or can they complement these lists later?

Diplomatic Missions can submit additional list(s) of diplomatic observers no later than 15 days before Election Day (on or before October 24th, 2015, 5:00pm).

To do so, Diplomatic Missions must follow the same process as described above.

There is no limit to the number of additional diplomatic observer lists which can be submitted by the Diplomatic Missions until 15 days before Election Day.

To facilitate the smooth processing of applications, Diplomatic Missions are advised to submit duly completed applications well in advance.

11. When and how can Diplomatic Missions collect Observer ID cards?

As soon as notified by the UEC that the card sets are ready for collection. Card sets will have to be collected at the UEC in Nay Pyi Taw by a person listed as one of the representatives of the Diplomatic Missions and

able to prove it by presenting a diplomatic card or an authorization letter of the Head of Mission / Ambassador / Charge d’Affaires. Observer ID Cards will be handed over to the Diplomatic Mission’s representative upon presentation of:

- the Original Observer Pledge of the relevant Observer (in cases where only a scanned pledge has previously been submitted, for accreditation requests by email);
- Photocopy of the main page and of the Myanmar visa page of the passport of the relevant observers when applicable. Nominated observers shall therefore arrange their visa applications well in advance in order to enable the Diplomatic Missions to collect their Observer ID Cards.

12. How can the observers not based in Myanmar get a visa?

Securing visa is the responsibility of nominated observers and the nominating Diplomatic Mission shall take all necessary steps to support their applications. These responsibilities include proposing only observers who are eligible for visa according to the Laws of the Union of Myanmar and who have signed a pledge to abide by Code of Conduct for International Observers (Notification 2 / 2015, issued on 19 March 2015). Observers are encouraged to arrange their visa applications well in advance, according to the rules laid down by relevant authorities of the Government of Myanmar. Observers will be allowed to stay in Myanmar for the duration of the granted visa. In addition to all documents required by the existing visa application procedures, individual observers shall include the following documents to their applications:

- A copy of the list of observers nominated by the Diplomatic Mission vetted by the UEC;
- the letter of invitation to observe issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed to the Diplomatic Mission;
- a letter of the Diplomatic Mission confirming that the observer is invited under the responsibility of the Diplomatic Mission, signed by the Head of Mission / Ambassador / Charge d’Affaires.

13. Will Observers receive a briefing?

The UEC is planning to organize briefings for Diplomatic Observers prior to Election Day. However, given the large number of Observers expected in Myanmar during that period, they may not be able to accommodate all observers.

It is the responsibility of the Diplomatic Missions to ensure that their Observers are properly trained about the Observers’ rights and duties, Code of Conduct and the election laws, regulations and procedures.

14. Do observers from foreign Diplomatic Missions have to submit a report of their observation activities?

No.

Disclaimer: this document is for information purpose. The Union of Myanmar's Election Law, Regulations and Procedures prevail.