



Accreditation of International Elections Observers by the Union Election Commission of Myanmar Frequently Asked Questions

Accreditation for International Observers 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).

Notice: organizations intending to conduct international election observation are kindly advised to submit their applications well in advance. Early applications will facilitate the work of the Union Election Commission and the success of the accreditation process.

1. I am an individual interested to observe the upcoming Myanmar elections. Can I apply individually to be an International 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.

Individuals willing to be international observers should contact an International Observation Organization.

Staff of the International Electoral Assistance Providers supporting UEC will be directly contacted.

2. Which organizations can apply?

Any organization with previous significant experience of international electoral observation can apply for accreditation with the UEC. International Observation Organizations planning to conduct long-term observation activities shall have established a Memorandum of Understanding with the Union Election Commission before their submission of the Accreditation Request.

3. Will the UEC pay for the costs of the observation missions?

No. International Observation Organizations are entirely responsible of the costs of their observation mission.

4. When can organizations submit their Accreditation Requests?

Application process is ongoing and Accreditation Requests can be submitted until 15 days before Election Day (on or before October 24th, 2015, 17:00hs). However, organizations are kindly advised to submit applications well in advance of that date.

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

International Election Observation Organizations shall submit their applications at the UEC in Nay Pyi Taw. For International Election Observation Organizations not represented in country, submission is by e-mail to info@uec.gov.mm and to the respective Myanmar Embassy in person or post. After submitting the Request for Accreditation document and other accompanying documents in original, by post or in person to the respective Myanmar Embassy abroad, the applicant International Election Observation Organization shall submit copy of the full application via email 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. *Will the UEC accredit Long Term Observers (LTOs) and Short Term Observers (STOs)?*

Yes. For the 2015 General Elections, the UEC will accredit both International LTOs and International STOs.

International Observation Organizations planning to conduct long-term observation activities shall have established a Memorandum of Understanding to that end with the Union Election Commission before their submission of the Accreditation Request. Long term international observers nominated by these organizations will be accredited in accordance to the existing regulations, for a period running up to the day Hlutaw Representatives are sworn in at the respective Hlutaws.

International organizations intending to conduct electoral observation that have not entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Union Election Commission will be granted accreditation for short-term international electoral observation, provided they meet the criteria for accreditation.

Observers nominated for short term international electoral observation will be granted accreditation and Identification Cards valid for the following periods of time:

- a. Individual Observers nominated for short-term observation by International Observation Organizations with a Memorandum of Understanding with UEC, will be accredited to observe for a period of 28 continuous days, inclusive of Election Day.
- b. Individual Observers nominated for short-term observation by accredited International Observation Organizations that do not have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with UEC, will be accredited to observe for a period of 10 continuous days, inclusive of Election Day.

International Observation Organizations can specify the continuous 10-day period or 28-day period during which they expect their STOs to observe in the “mission statement of the election observer group” that is part of the accreditation request, and/or the work plan of activities that shall be part of the accreditation request, as prescribed in Section 18 of the procedures. (see Question 7). The period of accreditation proposed by the International Observation Organizations shall include Election Day itself.

Based on operational constraints and coverage needs, the UEC may accredit the observers for another 10-day/28-day period, which would also include the Election Day.

7. Which documents shall an organization submit to request accreditation?

When applying for accreditation, the Organization shall submit a duly completed and signed Request Form for Accreditation of International Election Observation Organization (Annex A of the Procedures for International Election Observers), in English (can be downloaded from UEC website), and all other documents as prescribed in the procedures, among them:

- a. Organization's profile; names and the number of members;
- b. A mission statement specifying the phase(s) of the electoral cycle that the election observation organization intends to observe, and the period of observation.
- c. The work plan of the activities; with an indication of the states or regions where the election observations will be conducted,
- d. An electronic ID picture of the person submitting the application on behalf of the organization as mentioned under point 10 of the Request Form – picture shall be in JPEG format, high resolution (minimum number of pixels: 200 – preferred number of pixels: 400), on a clear background, with the picture file named following a "First Name_Family Name.jpg" format
- e. A statement letter of the election observation organization's source of fund signed by the Head of that organization;
- f. A recommendation letter from the Electoral Management Body (EMB) or Government of a country where the organization has previously observed elections, or a one page report duly signed by a representative of the organization, presenting the organization's experience of electoral observation and listing the EMBs by which the organization was previously accredited.

The Union Election Commission may verify the information provided by the applicant International Electoral Observation Organizations with the concerned EMBs or Embassies, as well as with any other relevant organizations referred to in its application.

8. When can applicant organization expect a reply to its Accreditation Request?

The UEC shall reply to completed applications within 7 days from the moment they have been scrutinized (scrutiny takes place within 3 days from the moment of receipt). UEC shall notify the observer organization with a request to complete the application with any missing documentation within 5 days after receiving the notification letter or email of UEC.

Upon confirmation that the request is approved, the Union Election Commission shall issue an Accreditation Letter for Election Observation Organization (Annex B of Procedures for International Election Observers in Observing the Hluttaw Elections) to the international election observer organization.

9. Shall applicant organizations submit the full list of nominated observers together with the Accreditation Request?

Applicant international electoral observation organizations are kindly advised to submit their complete documentation as early as possible. The UEC is aware of the difficulties for International Observation Organizations to consolidate a full list of observers by the time they will apply and in order to encourage Interna-

tional Election Observation Organizations to apply at an early stage, the UEC has therefore authorized submission of the list of International Observers either at the same time as the Accreditation Request or no later than 15 days before Election Day (on or before October 24th, 2015, 17:00hs).

10. Then, which documents shall organizations submit with their list of nominated observers?

Accredited organizations can nominate individual observers by submitting to the UEC all of the following documents:

- a. A copy of the organization's Accreditation Letter for Election Observation signed by the UEC (if the list is submitted separately from the Accreditation Request Form);
- b. A List of Nominated Observers signed by organizations' responsible person (second page of Annex A Procedures for International Election Observers in Observing the Hluttaw Elections) including the name, passport number, planned location of observation, and nationality of each observer clearly written or typed; A word version of the list template can be downloaded from the UEC website.
- c. Signed observer pledges (annex E); A word version of the pledge template can be downloaded from the UEC website.
- d. 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.

11. What will the UEC do with the list of nominated observers?

Upon receipt of the List of Nominated Observers, the UEC shall within 10 days of the reception of the list:

- a. Scrutinize if the List of Nominated 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; **Note:** UEC vetting of the list of observers constitutes only a confirmation that the Observation Organization has duly submitted the required information and the Observer Pledges. Final approval of the list of observers is determined by the procurement of visa to the observers by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar.
- d. Enter the following information into the database for each observer: date, name, nationality, passport number, organization name, period of validity.
- e. Issue one observer ID card set (laminated observer ID card and lanyard) for each submitted pledge;
- f. Contact the contact person of the observer organization mentioned on the accreditation request to invite the organization to collect the cards upon presentation of the Original Observer Pledges and of copies of each Observers' passports (main page and Myanmar visa page);
- g. Handover the cards to the responsible person or representative of the observer organization.

12. When and how shall the organization collect the 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 by a person listed as one of the representatives of the organization in the Accreditation Request form or by a person duly nominated to do so by the accredited organization's chairperson and able to prove it by presenting an authorization letter. Observer ID Cards will be handed over to the organization's representative upon presentation of:

- 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 (accreditation requests by email);
- Photocopy of the main page and of the Myanmar visa page of the passport of the relevant observers (main page and Myanmar visa page).

Nominated observers shall therefore arrange their visa applications well in advance in order to enable their Observation Organization to collect their Observer ID Cards.

13. *Can the organization submit more than one list of observers?*

There is no limit to the number of additional observer lists which can be submitted by the accredited organizations until 15 days before Election Day. Accredited organizations are kindly advised to complete the submission of lists of nominated observers well in advance.

14. *How shall nominated observers arrange their visa?*

Securing visa is the responsibility of nominated observers and the International Observation Organization 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).

In order for the Observation Organizations to collect Observer ID Cards, Observers intending to visit Myanmar shall obtain visa. Observers are therefore 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.

Once International Observation Organizations are accredited (as an organization) and their observer list has been vetted by the UEC, their nominated Observers must liaise with the relevant authorities of the Union of Myanmar in preparation of their visa requests. In addition to the application and documents required by the relevant rules of the Government of Myanmar, it is recommended that the visa application is accompanied by:

- a. Copy of the organization's Accreditation Letter signed by UEC;
- b. List of nominated observers as submitted to and receipt by UEC;
- c. The Observer Pledge duly signed by the observer.

15. *Does UEC reserve the right to withdraw accreditations?*

On March 19, 2015, the Union Election Commission approved a Code of Conduct for International Observers, which every observer member of an organization or International Election Observation Mission must

read and understand, as well as sign a pledge to abide by the Code. The code stipulates that in case of violations, “the Union Election Commission of Myanmar reserves the right to withdraw the observer accreditation of an individual Observer or an Observer Mission. The authority to determine the violation also rests with the Union Election Commission of Myanmar.”

16. Will International Observers receive a briefing?

The UEC is planning to organize briefings for International Long Term Observers and Diplomatic Observers during the week preceding the elections. UEC will do its utmost to accommodate as many observers present in Myanmar during that period.

It is the responsibility of International Observation Organizations to ensure that their Observers are properly trained about the Observers’ rights and duties and the election laws, regulations and procedures.

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