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ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN
ELECTION SECURITY RULES AND REGULATIONS
OF
THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN

In keeping with the provisions of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 to conduct safe, free and fair elections, the Election Commission of Bhutan hereby adopts and promulgates the Election Security Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan:

1. Short Title, Extent, Application and Commencement

- (a) These Rules shall be called the Election Security Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan.
- (b) These Rules shall extend to the whole of the Kingdom of Bhutan.
- (c) These Rules shall apply to the deployment of election security personnel to ensure safe, free and fair elections.
- (d) These Rules shall come into force with effect from

2. Definition

- (a) “Candidate” means a person who has filed his nomination to contest in an election;
- (b) “Campaigning” means the activities conducted by candidates and political parties aimed at soliciting votes by reaching out and convincing voters;
- (c) “Commission” means the Election Commission of Bhutan;
- (d) “Election Period” means the period beginning on the day of issue of notification and ending with the declaration of results;
- (e) “Election Representative” means the person appointed by a political party or candidate in each constituency to be its election representative;

- (f) “EVM” means the Electronic Voting Machine used for recording of votes and as defined in the EVM Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan;
- (g) “Nomination” means the process wherein the person desirous of contesting the election files his papers as a candidate of a political party or as an independent candidate;
- (h) “Observer” means a National Observer or an International Observer who is duly appointed by the Commission to observe the various stages of the electoral processes to ensure free and fair elections;
- (i) “Polling” means the process of casting votes at the Polling Booth;
- (j) “Polling Booth” means an enclosure made for voters to enable them to cast their vote in secrecy at any elections to Parliament or Local Governments and National Referendums;
- (k) “Polling Personnel” means the Presiding Officer and the Polling Officers designated to assist him during the day of poll;
- (l) “Polling Officer” means the election officer designated to assist the Presiding Officer in conducting the polls;
- (m) “Polling Representative” means a person appointed by a political party or candidate to represent the party or candidate during polling;
- (n) “Polling Station” means the area where polling takes place. A polling station can have one or more Polling Booths;
- (o) “Presiding Officer” means the person in charge of the Polling Station. He has the power to take decisions for the Polling Station within his jurisdiction;
- (p) “Returning Officer” means the person responsible for accepting and scrutinizing nomination papers, conducting and supervising elections and declaring result for the constituency or constituencies under his jurisdiction;

- (q) “Scrutiny” means the process by which the Returning Officer examines the nomination papers filed to see if the candidates are eligible to contest the election;
- (r) The words importing the masculine gender shall include feminine gender; and
- (s) The words importing the singular number shall include the plural number and vice versa, unless the context otherwise requires.

3. Security and Safety in Elections

- (a) These Rules shall provide for security and safety during elections by ensuring that :
 - (1) the system and procedures are safe and secure for efficient and effective organization of elections;
 - (2) the atmosphere for campaigning by all parties and candidates are free, fair, lawful and safe;
 - (3) there is no intimidation of voters and candidates;
 - (4) security of the lives and property of citizens during the campaign and polling;
 - (5) security of candidates as authorized by a competent authority during election period;
 - (6) security cover to Electoral Officers including Polling Personnel during election;
 - (7) maintenance of peace, law and order around the Polling Stations and Counting Centres; and
 - (8) safety and security of election materials from theft, destruction or fraud at Polling Stations and Counting Centres and during their transportation.

4. Royal Bhutan Police

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police shall be fully responsible for ensuring the safety and security of all elections conducted in Bhutan under the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan.
- (b) The Royal Bhutan Police shall designate one senior officer at the Royal Bhutan Police Headquarters as the Election Security Coordinator responsible for coordination and provision of security during elections held under the Election Act.
- (c) All officers and men on election security duty shall be governed by these Rules and the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan.
- (d) The Election Security Coordinator shall work in close consultation with the Election Commission.
- (e) All acts of the Superintendents of Police of Dzongkhags shall be coordinated by the Election Security Coordinator.

5. Personnel

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police shall ensure that adequate number of personnel is deployed on election duty to prevent and manage any election related security incidences and situations at any place and time.
- (b) The Commission shall, in view of the small size of the police force as against the requirement for manning of thousands of polling booths for safe, free, and fair elections, request the services of the Royal Bhutan Army.
- (c) The responsibility for the command and control of Royal Bhutan Army and Royal Bhutan Police personnel deployed on election duty will be placed under the respective Commanders and Superintendent of Police. However, the two organizations will liaise closely for the smooth functioning and proper coordination of the election security duties.

6. Conflict of Interests

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police shall, to avoid incidences of conflict of interests, ensure that officers and men, wherever avoidable, are not deployed in the polling stations located in their respective Gewogs.

7. Role of Election Security Coordinator

- (a) The role of the Election Security Coordinator shall be to provide security during elections through:
 - (1) liaising between Royal Bhutan Police and the Commission;
 - (2) coordinating manpower, communication and equipment of the Divisions of the Royal Bhutan Police in the Dzongkhags;
 - (3) disseminating security related information to the general public;
 - (4) briefing the officers on their roles and responsibilities during elections;
 - (5) reporting to the Commission on all aspects of security measures during elections; and
 - (6) ensuring that the Royal Bhutan Police personnel are adequately trained in personal security and election security.

8. Election Security Cell

- (a) The Superintendent of Police shall, for effective management of the election security, set up an Election Security Cell to coordinate and regulate the ground forces in every constituency, as deemed necessary.
- (b) The Cell shall also serve as the Control Room on the day of poll.
- (c) The Officer-in-Charge of the Cell shall report to the Superintendent of Police and the Returning Officer any untoward reports received.

9. Functions of the Election Security Cell

- (a) The primary function of the Election Security Cell shall be to:
 - (1) compile list of sensitive Polling Stations in the constituencies under its jurisdiction;
 - (2) plan manpower requirement, arms, communication sets and transportation well in advance and submit to the Election Security Coordinator;
 - (3) make deployment plans according to the sensitivity of the polling area and polling station; and
 - (4) give detailed briefing to the officers and men on election security duty regarding their duties and deployment.
- (b) The Election Security Cell during the day of poll shall:
 - (1) monitor the progress of the poll;
 - (2) monitor acts of violence and electoral malpractices;
 - (3) monitor police action; and
 - (4) send reinforcements wherever required.

10. Gradation of Sensitivity of Polling Stations

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police shall on the onset of an election, based on the information available, grade the security risk level of an area as sensitive or normal.
- (b) The Royal Bhutan Police shall determine the sensitivity of a Polling Station based on the following, among others:
 - (1) past history of incidences of irregularities, violence, riots or large-scale impersonation;
 - (2) prevailing law and order situation in a particular area;

- (3) nature of contest, viz., political status of candidate;
- (4) political rivalries; and
- (5) proximity to the international borders.

11. Issue of Arms

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police shall ensure that the security personnel on duty are appropriately armed and equipped.

12. Submission of Reports

- (a) The Superintendents of Police shall submit weekly reports to the Commission and the Election Security Coordinator on the following:
 - (1) current status of the enforcement of the prohibition on the carrying, bearing and transporting of firearms; and
 - (2) the law and order situation in a constituency, including existence of any hostile group, intensity of political rivalries and other circumstances that may affect the conduct of elections.

13. Pre-Poll Preventive Security Measures

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police shall, where necessary, stage flag march or large patrol in sensitive towns and villages as a confidence building measure to reassure the voters and the public at large that they can cast their votes without fear and to also forewarn the trouble creators of the availability of adequate security arrangements for dealing with any situation.
- (b) The Royal Bhutan Police shall not allow pasting of banners, poster or other propaganda materials on public or private property except at the places designated by the Commission.
- (c) The Royal Bhutan Police shall ensure that the political party and the candidate concerned remove the banners, posters and stickers put up

during the campaigns in the name of their parties or candidates at the end of an election.

- (d) The Royal Bhutan Police shall ensure that no unauthorized election campaign posters are distributed or pasted.
- (e) The Royal Bhutan Police shall ensure that political meetings and rallies organised by political parties or candidates are peaceful.
- (f) The Royal Bhutan Police shall allow conduct of political meetings or rallies by political parties or candidates only on production of the written approval of the Returning Officer and at the places designated by the concerned Superintendent of Police.
- (g) The political parties or candidates shall be responsible to ensure that the time and venue of the meeting or the route through which the rally proceeds is intimated to the concerned Superintendent of Police at least 24 hours before the event.
- (h) The Royal Bhutan Police shall ensure that restrictive orders in force at the place designated for holding meetings are strictly complied with.
- (i) The Royal Bhutan Police shall ensure that no person carries any weapon in public places during the period of elections.
- (j) Any person found/caught carrying firearm, except the security personnel on election duty, shall be detained by the Royal Bhutan Police personnel, firearm confiscated and charge-sheeted in a court of law.

14. Preventive Police Actions

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police shall be required to undertake the following:
 - (1) checking of vehicles, lodges etc.;
 - (2) prohibition of sale of liquor on the day of poll; and
 - (3) preventive checking at the barriers to check on movement of arms, liquors, and anti-social elements.

15. Prohibition of Campaign

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police shall ensure that all forms of campaigning stop 48 hours before the day of poll.

16. Election Offences

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police personnel shall notify the Returning Officer of any violation of Election Code of Conduct discovered by them.
- (b) The Royal Bhutan Police personnel shall, notwithstanding subsection (a), have the full authority to take immediate measures if and when the situation requires prompt action to be taken.
- (c) The Royal Bhutan Police shall after taking actions under subsection (b), immediately notify the Returning Officer.

17. Use of Vehicles by Political Parties and Candidates

- (a) Political parties and candidates shall log details of vehicles to be used for election campaign and submit the same to the Returning Officer before the campaigning starts.
- (b) The Returning Officer shall intimate the details of the vehicles permitted for use by the political parties and candidates to the concerned Superintendent of Police.

18. Use of Loud Speaker

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police shall ensure that the order of the Commission prescribing the use of loud speaker, whether fitted on vehicles or otherwise, is fully adhered to by the political parties, candidates and their workers.

19. Security Arrangements for Observers

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police shall make necessary security arrangements for Observers monitoring the elections.

20. Boycotts and Bans

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police shall ensure that the polling personnel, election material and all those participating at the polls are protected if an election boycott is called.
- (b) The Election Security Coordinator, in the event of a ban called by a hostile/anti-national group, treats the area as disturbed, whereby the Army shall be called to deal with the situation.

21. Security on Day of Poll

- (a) The security personnel on election duty shall be deployed not later than 24 hours before the day of poll.
- (b) Security at a polling station shall include:
 - (1) sanitizing against any form of sabotage at the polling station before the commencement of the poll;
 - (2) maintenance of law and order;
 - (3) securing the polling station during the period of poll;
 - (4) providing adequate security during the transportation of the EVMs and election materials;
 - (5) installing walk through metal detectors/frisking for sabotage materials including weapons at the entrance, where necessary;
 - (6) assisting the polling personnel in maintaining orderly queue of the voters, when necessary;
 - (7) prohibiting the polling representatives from taking the election material outside the polling booth and polling station;
 - (8) ensuring no canvassing takes place;
 - (9) evacuating and protecting men and materials when there is imminent danger;

- (10) ensuring safety of voters at the voting station; and
 - (11) reporting immediately against a polling official who is found guilty of breaching the code of conduct.
- (c) The security personnel on duty shall promptly execute all lawful orders of the Presiding Officer.
 - (d) The Royal Bhutan Police personnel shall be responsible for removal of aggressive, intoxicated, otherwise impaired, or unauthorized persons from the polling station who refuse to move at the request of a Polling Officer.
 - (e) The Royal Bhutan Police shall seal borders in the case of elections in the constituencies with international borders.
 - (f) The security at a polling station in sensitive areas shall, in addition to the other security measures, include:
 - (1) ensuring a safe passage for voters, officials, and candidates on their way to and from polling stations;
 - (2) patrolling around the polling station perimeter; and
 - (3) assisting in the maintenance of effective polling station entrance and exit controls during elections.

22. Security at the Counting Centre

- (g) Security at the Counting Centre shall include ensuring that:
 - (1) the secured store rooms where EVMs are stored are sealed, secured and guarded round the clock;
 - (2) each counting center is secured with an outer and an inner security cordon;
 - (3) people are not allowed to come within 100 meters of the counting centres and allowing political parties, candidates and their supporters to gather only at places designated by the Royal Bhutan Police; and

- (4) necessary fire safety measures are adopted.
- (h) The secured store room must be opened in the presence of personnel on election security duty.
- (i) The security personnel on duty at the secured store room shall maintain a log book in the Election Security Form No.1, mentioning the time of its opening and closing.
- (j) Security personnel on election duty shall normally not be authorised to enter a polling booth or counting hall when the poll or counting is in progress, unless an unavoidable security situation requires his presence and he is so directed by the Presiding Officer or the Returning Officer respectively.

23. Code of Conduct for Security Personnel on Election Duty

- (a) Security personnel on election duty must:
 - (1) strictly abide by the laws, rules, guidelines and briefings;
 - (2) refrain from indulging in intimidation or tacitly allowing electoral offences to be committed;
 - (3) be alert, approachable, professional, and impartial;
 - (4) use minimum force;
 - (5) wear the election duty identity cards issued by the Commission while on duty;
 - (6) work without fear or favour;
 - (7) not indulge in any campaigning or electioneering activities on behalf of any candidate or political party; and
 - (8) perform his duty in such a manner that inspires confidence in voters.

- (b) The security personnel of VIPs shall refrain from indulging in intimidation or tacitly allowing electoral offences to be committed.

24. Traffic Control on the Day of Poll

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police shall enforce the following restrictions on the day of poll:
 - (1) the candidate, election representative and one more person authorized by the party or candidate shall be allowed to move in a vehicle permitted for use by a political party or a candidate;
 - (2) the photographs of the persons with authorization must be displayed on the windscreen of the permitted vehicle; and
 - (3) ensure that the roads leading to the polling station are free from any blockade.
- (b) The Chief Coordinator of Election of the concerned Dzongkhag shall be intimated for necessary action in case of blockade due to natural causes.
- (c) The Royal Bhutan Police shall ensure that only vehicles authorised by the Returning Officer can display party logos, symbols, posters or flags.

25. Quick Reaction Team

- (a) Every Election Security Cell shall have a Quick Reaction Team.
- (b) The duties of the Quick Reaction Team shall be to:
 - (1) reinforce immediately the personnel on election duties in times of exigencies;
 - (2) rush to any area where trouble erupts; and
 - (3) conduct mobile patrol of the area from time to time.

26. Requisitioning Additional Force

- (a) The security personnel at the polling stations, counting centres or secured store rooms shall promptly request the Election Security Cell by the quickest available means, for backup, when necessary.

27. Security of EVMs or Ballot Boxes

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police shall ensure the safety and security of EVMs or Ballot Boxes in the manner laid down hereunder:
 - (1) secured store rooms must be guarded round the clock with sufficient number of armed security personnel;
 - (2) entry in the campus where EVMs are stored shall be allowed only on production of satisfactory identity cards or permits issued by Returning Officer; and
 - (3) movement inside the campus and inside the secured store rooms where EVMs are stored must be recorded.

28. Registry of Cases

- (a) All Officer Commanding on election duty shall maintain a separate Diary in the Election Security Form No.2, wherein he shall record all complaints relating to election offences.
- (b) Officer Commanding of the respective police station shall register the cases of electoral offence and investigate and charge sheet expeditiously.
- (c) The Royal Bhutan Police shall furnish statement of facts to the Commission on request.

29. Post Poll Period

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police shall for the post poll period:
 - (1) designate specific places for each political party where their supporters would be authorised to assemble at the time of declaration of results;
 - (2) regulate the victory procession after the declaration of results; and
 - (3) ensure that there are no clashes between political parties.

30. Technical Support

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police shall arrange to provide equipment and technical support to the security personnel on election duty.

31. Liability

- (a) The concerned Security Agencies shall be liable for any lapse in arrangement and provision of security under these Rules.

32. Penalties

- (a) The Royal Bhutan Police personnel found guilty of violation of duty or willful breach or neglect of these Rules or lawful order shall be dealt as per the Police Act, and the Election Act.
- (b) Any person or political party found guilty of the violation of any of these Rules shall be dealt with in accordance with the Penal Code of Bhutan and the Election Act.

33. Power of the Commission to Issue Instructions and Directions

- (a) The Commission may issue instructions and directions:
 - (1) For the clarification of any of the provisions of these Rules and Regulations;

- (2) For the removal of any difficulty which may arise in relation to the implementation of any such provisions; and
- (3) In relation to any matter with respect to Election Security, for which these Rules make insufficient provision, and clarification is necessary in the opinion of the Commission.

34. Authority of Interpretation and Amendment

- (a) The Election Commission shall, in case of differences in meaning, be the final authority on interpretation of these Rules.
- (b) The Election Commission shall have the power to amend by way of addition, variation, or repeal the provisions of these Rules.

Done under our hands and seal of the Election Commission of the Kingdom of Bhutan (ECB) on this...Day of the ...Month of the Year... corresponding to the...Day of the... Month of the ...Year in the Bhutanese calendar.

Election Commissioner

Election Commissioner

Chief Election Commissioner

Election Security Form No.2



**REGISTRY OF CASES
DIARY**

Sl.No:	Name of the complainant	Name of the accused	Election offences	Date	Remark

Officer Commanding