

**Carter Center Statement on the Electoral Campaign Period in Myanmar  
Oct. 27, 2015**

**Executive Summary**

The campaign period, which began on Sept. 8, has been peaceful and relatively unrestricted in areas observed by The Carter Center. While parties and candidates have generally been able to

The police and other security services should be instructed to implement election security plans in a manner that is non-discriminatory and that does not interfere with the activities of candidates, media, or observers.

#### *Union Election Commission*

The UEC should act on complaints submitted by political parties and candidates, including in cases alleging the misuse of religion during the campaign, and provide timely responses. The UEC should work with law enforcement authorities to ensure election violations are promptly investigated.

Voter identification requirements should be broadly publicized, including the fact that voter slips are not mandatory for voting.

There should be greater transparency about voter list technical problems and measures that have been implemented to address them. The criteria used to determine the areas where elections cannot be held should be made public.

Polling station officials should be instructed to exercise their discretion to limit access to polling stations in a way that does not obstruct the observation of voting and counting by domestic observers in a manner consistent with their methodology.

Small rallies and meetings, door-to-door canvassing, and distribution of pamphlets appear to be the primary means through which parties and candidates are reaching voters. In urban centers,

Although campaigning has been mostly peaceful and unrestricted, political space throughout the country remains uneven. In areas visited, not all parties have had equal opportunity to campaign.<sup>6</sup> For instance, in Zigon township in Bago region, candidates from two parties complained to observers that they were forced to remove signboards in constituencies in which senior government officials are contesting. In others, signboards were reportedly removed by rival parties or after objections by *Ma Ba Tha* supporters. The NLD also made an official complaint that it had been denied access to campaign on Coco Island, a remote island ;

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## **Voter List and Identification**

The national display of the voter list concluded amidst widespread allegations of errors, although many allegations are unsubstantiated. The UEC acknowledges that there were some technical difficulties with the software used to maintain the voter list and human errors when preparing and printing the lists for the national display, but claims to have promptly addressed these issues. Some sub-commissions decided to stop using the official software in favor of *ad hoc* measures, which are unlikely to have the same safeguards, such as the ability to track when and by whom changes and corrections are made.<sup>10</sup> Problems with out-of-country voting lists have been widely reported in the press.<sup>11</sup> The overall seriousness and scope of voter list issues is unclear.

The Carter Center observed the most recent display of the voter list in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Rakhine, and Shan states, and in Ayeyarwady region. The display opened on Sept. 14 and closed on Sept. 27 in nearly all places observed. However, in flood-affected areas of Ayeyarwady, Magway, Mandalay, and Sagaing regions and Chin state, the display was extended for up to two weeks. The decision to display the names in alphabetical order rather than by household created confusion in some areas but was viewed as an improvement in others. The civil society observer organization People's Alliance for Credible Elections (PACE) deployed 110 observers to observe the voter list display in 864 locations across the country. PACE found the process to be absent of intimidation or prejudicial treatment of voters but noted that procedures were not consistently applied and that there was a lack of voter engagement in the process.<sup>12</sup>

Election day voter identification requirements have not been clearly communicated to the public. The UEC has stated that it plans to issue voter slips to all voters one week before election day. Though the UEC has confirmed that the new voter slips will not be required in order to vote, the planned issuance of the slips could create further uncertainty about identification requirements.



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