



GUIDELINES
For Media In Uganda
DURING
THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

PREAMBLE

Aware of our history and desiring of well regulated, peaceful, free and fair elections and the need to avoid unnecessary political tensions aggravated by the media;

Recognizing the central role the media play in the electoral process by providing the public with information on which to base their decisions, facilitating public debate on the choices before the voters and providing a voice to voters;

Cognizant that free, independent, responsible and pluralistic media are critical to advancing and sustaining democracy and peaceful, free and fair elections;

Aware that our Constitution and regulatory frameworks guarantee all citizens the right of freedom of speech and expression, which includes freedom of press and media, as well as the right of access to information;

Acknowledging that media freedoms come with responsibilities, in particular professional coverage of elections in a fair, balanced and impartial manner and the promotion of peaceful and responsible conduct by all stakeholders in the electoral process;

Therefore **agree** and **accept** to subscribe to these Guidelines¹, and to take all reasonable steps to ensure their observance during the electoral process;

We further **agree** that the media, taken to mean newspapers, tabloids, radio, television and online platforms including social media shall be independent, tolerant, professional and accountable; self-regulated, committed to protecting the freedom of citizens, reflecting diversity of opinion and enabling democratic growth in Uganda.

¹The guidelines are developed in close collaboration between the Electoral Commission, the Media Center, the Media Council and media practitioners from various parts of Uganda.

THE CODE OF CONDUCT

1. The Media shall at all times adhere to and uphold the journalists professional code of ethics as contained in Schedule 4 to the Press and Journalists Act [Cap 105].
2. The media shall be professional and uphold the principles of truth, objectivity, fairness, and respect for all users and suppliers of information.
3. The media shall avoid inciting hatred and promoting public disorder, by refraining from publishing or broadcasting material that is likely to cause hatred towards a party or an organization or any other stakeholder in the electoral process.

Media houses are not to be a party to the promotion of hostility towards a race, ethnic tribe, origin, nationality, region and religion.

4. The media shall desist from any reporting that compromise the principles of gender equality and social inclusion, and avoid the use of discriminatory and demeaning language and messages against special interest groups.
5. The media shall hold themselves independent and free of control and direction from any of the political parties and organizations or candidates.
6. The media shall be accurate, balanced and impartial in their election reporting and not discriminate against any political party, candidate or supporters.

This duty requires that media houses must not be biased in favour of, or against, any party or candidate.

7. The media shall act ethically in dealing with news sources, the public and fellow journalists/media houses. This includes respecting the right to privacy, observe the standard of decency and treat

people with compassion, respect and dignity, as well as give natural justice to all involved in the electoral process.

8. The media shall report factually in case of violence and not glorify perpetrators of crimes such as electoral violence, intimidation, defamation and bribery during the electoral process, or promoting such acts in their reporting.
9. The media shall promptly correct any inaccuracies and ensure that correction and apologies receive due prominence. This will include the right to reply to parties and organizations or independent candidates who feel they have been unfairly criticized.
10. The media shall seek the truth and not lend to distortion or suppression of truth due to commercial or economic pressures, big spending or other forms of consideration.

11. The media shall avoid manipulations of photographs and quotes and withstand from reporting in favour of stakeholders from whom they (the media) have received favors, gifts, bribes or other inducements.
12. The media shall exercise editorial judgment and observe the electoral laws and any other law in force and in favor of good test and respect for public safety and decency. Editorials and opinions shall be clearly distinguished to avoid the danger of misleading audiences.
13. The media shall provide equal access, coverage and opportunity to all political parties and organizations without discrimination to purchase space to promote their respective views during the electoral process. News coverage and editorials shall be provided equally to all the candidates and their parties.

¹See Appendix 1 for a list of media and electoral laws

14. The media shall encourage full and effective participation in the electoral process and debate of women and other special interest groups.
15. Media houses shall report opinion polls in context of their methodology, timing and purpose. The researcher that conducted the poll will be stated, the time and areas where the poll was conducted shall be mentioned, the sample size, the questions asked and the methodology explained.
16. The media shall recognize that final results are declared by the Electoral Commission in all reporting and state the source of any other results related information. In case provisional elections results are reported, a media house shall state so, and indicate the details of the provisional results being reported (percentage and electoral area). The final declaration of any elections results is the constitutional mandate of the Electoral Commission.

17. The media house and journalists shall follow journalistic principles on social media and treat social media comments and posts as any other source of information.
18. The first duty of any journalist or media house is to inform the public. As part of the education and information role, the media shall throughout the election time provide accurate education and information on the electoral processes.
19. The media shall always refer to electoral laws and election officials whenever they are in doubt on any issues relating to the electoral process.



Eng. Dr. Badru M.Kiggundu
CHAIRPERSON, ELECTORAL COMMISSION
1st February 2016

Appendix 1

The legal and institutional framework that guides the operations of the media in Uganda:

1. The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (as amended);
2. The Electronic Media Act, Cap 104,
3. The Press and Journalist Act, Cap 105,
4. The Penal Code Act, Cap 120,
5. The Official Secrets Act, Cap 302,
6. The Uganda Broadcasting Corporation Act, No 5/2005;
7. The Access to Information Act, No 6/2005;

Appendix 2

The Electoral Commission executes its mandate within the following main legal framework inclusive of the enabling laws as passed by the Parliament, namely:

1. The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995 (as amended);
2. The Political Parties and Organizations Act 18 of 2005;
3. The Electoral Commission Act, Cap 140;
4. The Presidential Elections Act 16 of 2005;
5. The Parliamentary Elections Act 17 of 2005;
6. The Local Governments Act, Cap 243;
7. The National Women's Council Act, Cap 318;
8. The National Youth Council Act, Cap 319;
9. The Referendum and Other Provisions Act 1 of 2005;
10. The Kampala Capital City Authority Act; and Other statutory instruments/guidelines.



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