

Human Rights on Election

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Election is thing that gives us the privilege to elect some government officials and exercising our rights on elections. The importance of elections in a democracy is seen through the opportunity citizens have to pick leaders of their choice to represent them in governance structures such as Parliament.

The freedom to choose leaders in an atmosphere that allows participating political parties to sell their manifestos to attract voters is what distinguishes a democracy from a dictatorship. By voting, we hope to at least communicate some of our preferences for government policy through our selection of leaders. Simultaneously, candidates, political parties, and interest groups hope to attract us to their causes. Thus, elections are contests among a number of individuals and groups to shape government policy. How well elections work as instruments of democracy whether the public benefits from the contests depend on election rules and who participates.

Impartial election observers can strengthen an electoral process by providing an independent assessment of election preparations, capabilities, and fairness. Observers offer assurance to all sides that fraud will be detected. Their presence also increases voters' confidence that they can safely and secretly cast their ballots and that vote tabulation will be conducted without tampering. Besides presenting a way that all citizens can participate in the political life of their nation, elections call for those elected to respond to the will of the people.

Elections in the Philippines are the arena in which the country's elite families compete for political power. The wealthiest clans contest national and provincial offices. Families of lesser wealth compete for municipal offices. In the barangays, where most people are equally poor, election confers social prestige but no real power or money.

Voting rates have generally been high (approximately 80 to 85 percent in national elections), despite obstacles such as difficult transportation, the need to write out the names of all candidates in longhand, and, occasionally, the threat of violence. Filipinos enjoy and expect elections so much that even Ferdinand Marcos dared not completely deny them this outlet. Instead, he changed the rules to rig the elections in his favor.