

# ELECTION COMMISSION OF PAKISTAN

## DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT

### FOR POLITICAL PARTIES AND CONTESTING CANDIDATES FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS, 2007

#### **1. General Conduct:**

- (1) The political parties shall not propagate any opinion, or act in any manner prejudicial to the ideology of Pakistan, or the sovereignty, integrity or security of Pakistan, or morality, or the maintenance of public order, or the integrity or independence of the judiciary of Pakistan, or which defames or brings into ridicule the judiciary or the armed forces of Pakistan, as provided under Article 63 of the Constitution.
- (2) Criticism of other political parties, when made, shall be confined to their policies and programme, past record and work. Parties and candidates shall refrain from criticism of all aspects of private life, not connected with the public activities of the leaders or workers of other parties. Criticism based on unverified allegations or distortion shall be avoided.
- (3) Concerned political parties and contesting candidates may announce their overall development programme. But after the announcement of the election schedule till the day of polling, no candidate or any person on his behalf shall, openly or in secret, give any subscription or donation, or make promise for giving such subscription or donation, to any institution of their respective constituency or to any other institution, nor shall commit to undertake any development project in the respective constituency.
- (4) All parties and candidates shall avoid scrupulously all activities which are "*corrupt practices*" and offences under the election laws such as the bribing of voters, intimidation and personation of voters, canvassing within 400 yards of a polling station, holding public meetings during the period of 48 hours ending with the hour fixed for the close of the poll by the Election Commission of Pakistan.

- (5) **The right of every individual for peaceful and undisturbed domestic life shall be respected, irrespective of any resentment that a political party or a candidate may have against such individual for his political opinion or activities. Organizing demonstrations or picketing before the house of such individual with a view to protest against his political opinion or activities shall be prohibited under any circumstances.**
- (6) No political party or candidate shall permit his followers to make use of any individual's land, building, compound wall etc. without his permission for erecting flag-staffs, suspending banners, pasting notices, writing slogans etc.
- (7) Political parties and candidates shall ensure that their supporters do not create obstructions in or disturb meetings and processions organized by the other parties. Workers or sympathizers of one political party shall not create disturbance at public meetings organized by another political party.
- (8) **Political parties and contesting candidates shall firmly restrain their workers from exerting undue pressure against the print and electronic media, including newspaper offices and printing presses, or resorting to violence of any kind against the media.**
- (9) Political parties and contesting candidates shall refrain from making such comments on international issues as are likely to embarrass the government's relations with other countries, nor shall they say anything or do any act in any manner, which might prejudice Pakistan's foreign relations. Controversial and harsh remarks about leaders of other countries and their ideologies shall be avoided.
- (10) The political parties, contesting candidates and workers shall refrain from deliberate dissemination of false and malicious information. The workers of political parties shall not indulge in forgeries and disinformation to defame other political parties/leaders. The use of abusive language against the leaders and candidates of other political parties shall be avoided at all costs.

- (11) The political parties shall refrain from speeches calculated to arouse parochial and sectarian feelings and controversy of conflicts between genders, sects, communities and linguistic groups. [Section 78 of the Representation of the People Act, 1976].
- (12) Appeals to violence or resort to violence during meetings, processions, or during polling hours shall be strictly avoided. [Section 81 of the Representation of People Act, 1976].
- (13) No person shall in any manner cause injury to any person or damage to any property. [Section 81 of the Representation of the people Act, 1976].
- (14) Carriage and display of all kinds of *lethal* weapons and fire arms shall not be allowed in public meetings and processions and official regulations in respect thereof shall be strictly observed. Aerial firing, use of crackers and other explosives at public meetings shall not be allowed.
- (15) The political parties, contesting candidates, agents or workers shall not indulge in offering gifts or gratifications or inducement to any person to stand or not to stand as a candidate, or to withdraw or not to withdraw his candidature. [Section 79 of the Representation of the People Act, 1976].
- (16) The political parties, contesting candidates and their workers shall not propagate against the participation of any person in the elections on the basis of *gender, ethnicity, religion or caste. Political Parties' officials, candidates or others shall not encourage or enter into agreements debarring women from becoming candidates or exercising their right of vote in an election.*
- (17) Ministers shall not combine their official visits with election campaign.

- (18) The political parties and contesting candidates shall not procure the support or assistance of any civil servant to promote or hinder the election of a candidate. [Section 83 of the Representation of the People Act, 1976].
- (19) The political parties and their candidates shall dissuade their workers or sympathizers from destroying any ballot paper or any official mark on the ballot paper. [Section 87 of the Representation of the People Act, 1976].
- (20) No person or a political party or a candidate shall hoist or fix party flags on any public property or at any public place, except with the permission in writing from, and on payment of such fee or charges as may be chargeable by, the concerned local government or authorities. Wall chalking as part of an election campaign shall be prohibited in all forms. [Section 83A of the Representation of the People Act, 1976].
- (21) No election camp shall be set up on any road or place meant for the use of the public. Election camp shall as far as possible be simple. No food or drink shall be served to the voters in the election camp.
- (22) No contesting candidate or a political party shall cross the limit of election expenses – rupees one-and-a-half million for the National Assembly seat and rupees one-million for the Provincial Assembly seat. (Section 49 of the Representation of the People Act, 1976).
- (23) Section 83A of the Representation of the People Act, 1976 lays down that no person or a political party shall affix posters, hoardings, banners or leaflets/handbills larger than the sizes prescribed by the Election Commission. The Commission has prescribed the sizes as under:
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|-----|---------------------------|---------------------|
| (a) | <u>Posters</u>            | 2-feet x 3-feet     |
| (b) | <u>Hoardings</u>          | 3-feet x 5-feet     |
| (c) | <u>Banners</u>            | 3-feet x 9-feet     |
| (d) | <u>Leaflets/Handbills</u> | 9-inches x 6 inches |

**The local authority and the Returning Officer shall be responsible for the effective implementation of the provisions of this section.**

- (24) Parties and politicians shall refrain from making references to secret and confidential matters, which were within their official knowledge when they were in power. Nor shall they betray the confidence which they enjoyed by virtue of their official position.
- (25) No advertisement, notice or announcement paid for from public funds shall carry the explicit or implicit reference, name, designation or photo of any public functionary or holder of a state or public office to project him/her as the originator, sponsor, promoter or organizer of any scheme, project, progress, ideology or vision.
- (26) Issue of advertisement at the cost of public exchequer in the newspapers and other media and the misuse of official mass media during the election period for partisan coverage of political news and publicity regarding achievements with a view to furthering the prospects of the party in power shall be scrupulously avoided.

**2. Meetings:**

- (1) The party or candidates shall inform the local administration of the venue and time of any proposed meeting well in time so as to enable the police to make necessary arrangements for controlling traffic and maintaining law and order.
- (2) A party or candidate shall ascertain in advance if there are any restrictive or prohibitory orders in force in the place proposed for the meeting. If such orders exist, they shall be followed strictly. If any exception is required from such orders it shall be applied for and permission obtained well in time.
- (3) Organisers of a meeting shall invariably seek the assistance of the police on duty for dealing with persons disturbing a meeting or otherwise attempting to create a disorder. Organisers themselves shall not take action against such persons.
- (4) The political parties and their candidates shall not hold public meetings or rallies on main streets, roads and chowks to avoid traffic jams and public inconvenience.

**3. Processions:**

- (1) Processions shall not be taken out by one party along places at which meetings are being held by another party. Posters affixed by one party shall neither be removed nor distribution of handbills and leaflets prevented by workers of another party.
- (2) A party or candidate organizing a procession shall decide before hand the time and place of the starting of the procession, the route to be followed and the time and place at which the procession will terminate. There shall ordinarily be no deviation from the programme. The organizers shall give advance intimation *of at least 3 days* to the local police authorities of the programmes so as to enable them to make necessary arrangements.
- (3) The organizers shall ascertain if any restrictive orders are in force in the localities through which the procession has to pass, and shall comply with the restrictions unless exempted specially by competent authority. Any traffic regulations or restrictions shall also be carefully adhered to.
- (4) The organizers shall take steps in advance to arrange for passage of the procession so that there is no block or hindrance to traffic. If the procession is very long, it shall be organized in segments of suitable lengths, so that at convenient intervals, especially at points where the procession has to pass road junctions, the passage of held up traffic could be allowed by stages thus avoiding heavy traffic congestion.
- (5) If two or more political parties or candidates propose to take processions over the same route or parts thereof at about the same time, the organizers shall establish contact well in advance and decide upon the measures to be taken to ensure that the processions do not clash or cause hindrance to traffic. The assistance of the local administration shall be availed of for arriving at a satisfactory arrangement. For this purpose, the parties shall contact the local administration at the earliest opportunity *but not later than 3 clear days before the date of the procession.*
- (6) The political parties or candidates shall exercise control to the maximum extent possible in the matter of processionists carrying articles, which may

be put to misuse by undesirable elements, especially in moments of excitement.

**4. Polling Day:**

- (1) All political parties and candidates shall-
    - (i) co-operate with the officers on election duty to ensure peaceful and orderly polling and complete freedom to the voters to exercise their franchise without being subjected to any annoyance or obstructions; [Section 86 of the Representation of the People Act, 1976];
    - (ii) supply to their authorized polling agents badges or identity cards;
  - (2) Political parties shall carry out a comprehensive plan for education of voters in the manner of marking the ballot paper and casting votes.
  - (3) Excepting the voters, candidates or duly authorized election agents, no one without a valid pass from the Election Commission or Provincial Election Commissioner concerned or District Returning Officers shall enter the polling booths. However, foreign/domestic observers and representatives of recognized bodies will be provided free access to witness the election process on production of the identification cards/passes issued to them by the aforesaid Election Commission authorities.
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