

ELECTION COMMISSION OF PAKISTAN

Islamabad, dated 13th October 2023

NOTIFICATION

No.F.4 (2)2021-MCO-Vol-I (2) In exercise of the powers conferred upon it under Article 218(3) of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, read with Section 233 of the Elections Act 2017, and all other powers enabling it in that behalf, the Election Commission hereby issues the Code of Conduct for the National Media. The National media shall follow this Code of Conduct during the upcoming General Elections, local government elections and subsequent bye-elections in letter and spirit.

Code of Conduct for National Media

1. During the election campaign, the content floated on print, electronic and digital media, shall not reflect any opinion prejudicial to the ideology, sovereignty, dignity or security of Pakistan, public order or the integrity and independence of the judiciary of Pakistan and other national institutions.
2. Allegations and statements which may harm national solidarity or may create law and order situation from the issuance of election schedule till the notification of returned candidate shall be strictly avoided on print & electronic media and by any media person, newspaper and channel operating official account on digital media and other social media influencers.
3. The content on print & electronic media, any media person, newspaper, channel operating official accounts on digital media and social media influencers shall not include any aspect which might be construed as personal attack on candidates or political parties on the basis of gender, religion, sect, caste, baradari etc. In case of violation, legal action shall be taken against the violator.
4. If a candidate makes an allegation against another candidate, the media should seek comments and verification from both the sides by providing fair opportunities to both the parties.
5. The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Press Information Department (PID), Cyber Wing and Digital Media Wing of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MoIB) shall monitor the coverage given to political parties and candidates for their election campaigns through electronic channels, print and social media. The above authorities shall submit to the Commission details of payments made by the political parties and candidates within 10 days after poll day.
6. The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Press Information Department (PID), Cyber Wing and Digital Media Wing of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MoIB) shall assist the Election Commission in implementation of this Code of conduct. They shall further provide at any time, any information required by Election Commission of Pakistan in the discharge of its constitutional duties.
7. The government and law enforcing agencies shall provide due protection to media persons, and media houses to maintain their freedom of expression as their fundamental right.
8. No print, electronic or digital media shall run campaign of candidates and political parties at the cost of public exchequer.
9. The journalists or print, electric and digital media, social media influencers and media houses throughout the election period shall launch Civic and Voter Education programs which shall be inclusive especially focusing marginalized groups such as women, transgender, youth, minorities and differently abled persons to maximize voter turnout and ensure their participation in electoral process.

10. In light of Section 182 of the Elections Act 2017, any media person on print, electronic and social media shall refrain from projecting election campaign of any candidate or political party during a period of forty-eight hours ending at midnight following the conclusion of the poll for any election.
11. Any media person from print, electronic and digital media shall not obstruct the election process in any way and shall display their accreditation cards provided by the Election Commission.
12. Print & Electronic media and any journalist, newspaper, and channel on their official accounts on digital media, and other social media influencers shall refrain from entrance and exit polls or conducting any kind of surveys at any polling station or constituency which may influence the voters' free choice of casting vote or hinder the process in any way.
13. Only accredited media persons shall be allowed to enter a polling station (along with camera) for making footage for the voting process only once. They shall ensure secrecy of the ballot and shall not make footage of the screened off compartment. However, media personnel shall be allowed to observe the counting process without making any footage of the process.
14. During coverage of polling process, media persons shall not obstruct directly or indirectly any pre-election, election and post-election process.
15. The media shall not air any unofficial result of a polling station until one hour has passed after the close of poll.
16. Broadcasters will air results after one hour of polling ending with clear disclaimer that these are unofficial, incomplete and fractional results, which should not be taken as final results until Returning officer has announced result of the constituency. In case of any violation, ECP may direct concerned authorities for appropriate action.
17. In case of violation of this Code of Conduct, the Election Commission of Pakistan reserves the right to withdraw accreditation of an individual journalist/Media Organization. The authority to determine the violation also rests with the Election Commission of Pakistan.

By orders of the Election Commission of Pakistan.



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To,

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