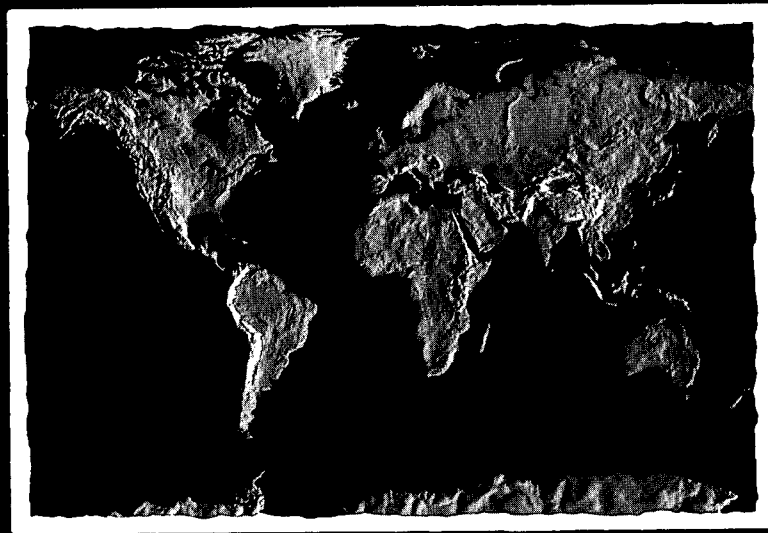


NDI



HANDBOOK

How Domestic Organizations Monitor Elections

An A To Z Guide

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

NDI

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How Domestic Organizations
Monitor Elections
AN A TO Z GUIDE

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Michael Stoddard, formerly NDI's counsel for electoral programs and currently an attorney at the Federal Election Commission, is the principal author of the *NDI Handbook—How Domestic Organizations Monitor Elections: An A to Z Guide*.

The *Handbook* would not have been possible without the contributions of several individuals who deserve special thanks. Larry Garber, NDI's senior associate for election processes from 1987-1993, first developed the idea for the *Handbook* and wrote most of the first two chapters. Patrick Merloe, who succeeded Garber at NDI, helped to edit the final product and see it through to completion. Significant contributions were also provided by Merloe for the section on monitoring the media and by Senior Advisor Glenn Cowan for the section on parallel vote tabulations. The task of final editing was carried out principally by NDI President Kenneth Wollack. Thanks are also due to Joseph Hennessey and Suzanne George who worked on this project during their summers in law school.

The pages of the *Handbook* tell the stories and lessons of domestic monitoring efforts around the world. Therefore, NDI wishes to acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of the many NDI staff and volunteer consultants who helped conduct, analyze and report on those experiences. Most important, NDI recognizes the commitment, and, in many cases, courage of the thousands of civic activists who have monitored elections in their countries as a means to promote and sustain democratic practices and values.

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NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) was established in 1983. By working with political parties, civic organizations, parliaments, and other institutions, NDI seeks to promote, maintain and strengthen democratic institutions in new and emerging democracies. The Institute is headquartered in Washington, D.C., and has a staff of 120 with field offices in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the former Soviet Union.

NDI has supported the development of democratic institutions in more than 60 countries. Programs focus on six major areas:

Political Party Training: NDI conducts multipartisan training seminars in political development with a broad spectrum of democratic parties. NDI draws international experts to forums where party members learn first-hand the techniques of organization, communication and constituent contact.

Election Processes: NDI provides technical assistance for political parties, nonpartisan associations and election authorities to conduct voter and civic education campaigns and to develop election monitoring programs. The Institute has also organized more than 25 major international observer delegations.

Strengthening Legislatures: NDI organizes seminars focusing on legislative procedures, staffing, research information, constituent services, committee structures and the function and role of party caucuses. NDI programs also promote access to the legislative process by citizen groups and the public at large.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS	iv
INTRODUCTION	vii
CHAPTER ONE—MONITORING ELECTIONS	1
Why Monitor?	2
Who Monitors?	2
<i>election officials ... political parties ... local media ... nonpartisan organizations</i>	
What is Monitored?	4
How Nonpartisan Organizations Monitor	5
CHAPTER TWO—THE EVOLUTION OF MONITORING BY NONPARTISAN DOMESTIC ORGANIZATIONS	7
The NAMFREL Model	8
Building upon the NAMFREL Experience	8
Consolidating Fragile Democracies	11
CHAPTER THREE—DEVELOPING A NONPARTISAN MONITORING OPERATION: AN A TO Z GUIDE	13
Part One—Initiating a Monitoring Effort	15
A A Need	15
B A General Plan	16
<i>objectives and guiding principles ... specific goals and tasks ... developing an election calendar ...</i>	
<i>developing a budget ... managing the plan ... evaluating and revising the plan</i>	
C Approaches to Organizing	19
D A Committee of Directors and a Democratic Organizational Structure	21
E Credibility	23
<i>maintain independence and impartiality ... communicate clearly and regularly ... ensure the integrity</i>	
<i>of your plan and methodology ... execute your plan</i>	
F Operating Funds	25
G Office Facilities	26
Part Two—Preparing the Operation	29
H Personnel	29
I Recruiting	30
<i>how many people? ... what qualifications? ... where do you look? ... how will you recruit?</i>	
J Training	34
<i>system of training ... trainers ... audience ... agenda</i>	
K Training Manual	37
L Public Information	38
<i>channels of communication ... press release</i>	

M Logistics	42
<i>communication ... transportation ... accommodation</i>	
N Coordination	45
O Security	46
Part Three—Monitoring the Pre-Election Phase	49
P Election System	49
<i>general principles and issues ... advocacy</i>	
Q Civic and Voter Education	52
R Registration of Voters, Political Parties and Candidates	53
<i>voter registration ... political party and candidate registration</i>	
S Election Campaign	56
<i>general principles and issues ... resources ... intimidation and coercion ... enforcement and the</i>	
<i>review process ... specific monitoring techniques</i>	
T Media	62
<i>general considerations ... radio and television ... print media ... reporting results</i>	
Part Four—Monitoring the Election and Post-Election Phases	69
U Voting	69
<i>general principles ... issues to monitor ... inside of the voting station ... the officials ... the voters ...</i>	
<i>outside of the voting station ... specific monitoring techniques</i>	
V Counting	76
<i>general principles and issues ... issues to monitor ... special monitoring techniques</i>	
W Tabulation	77
<i>general principles and issues ... parallel vote tabulations (PVTs)</i>	
X Post-Election Developments	82
Part Five—Post-Election Activities	85
Y Post-Election Reporting	85
<i>types of reports ... analyzing information and issuing reports</i>	
Z Final Considerations	87
APPENDIX I—LEGAL PROVISIONS FOR ELECTIONS AND MONITORING	89
APPENDIX II—SAMPLE BROCHURE FOR A DOMESTIC MONITORING ORGANIZATION	99
APPENDIX III—SAMPLE MONITORING FORMS	105
APPENDIX IV—SAMPLE REPORTS	125
SELECTED NDI PUBLICATIONS	152

INTRODUCTION

This *Handbook* is designed to assist domestic civic organizations in monitoring elections. Most of the principles and advice presented in the *Handbook* are also applicable to monitoring efforts that are organized by political parties or, for that matter, by international observers.

Establishing domestic monitoring capabilities provides valuable safeguards for a fair election process. Equally important, the development of such mechanisms contributes to the evolution of a more active civil society.

The *Handbook* draws upon the experiences of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). Since 1986, NDI has conducted 75 election-related programs in more than 30 countries. In observing elections, NDI has trained, worked with and relied upon the findings of various domestic monitoring operations. While the work of domestic election monitors is often overshadowed by international observers, its impact on the process is frequently more profound and longlasting.

The import and relevance of international observers in encouraging electoral participation and safeguarding the credibility of electoral processes have expanded dramatically since 1980. Indeed, international observers are now routinely invited to monitor "first" or "transition" elections, and their presence in many countries has contributed to the peaceful resolution of longstanding conflicts.

The emphasis on international observers, however, may obscure the significant role played by domestic, nonpartisan monitoring groups in guaranteeing electoral fairness. Election monitoring by domestic groups, of course, is not a new phenomenon; election officials and political contestants have long sought to develop and implement mechanisms for ensuring fair elections in their countries. In recent years, however, domestic monitoring has grown more sophisticated and now involves actors other than election officials and contestants.

The implications of this development are twofold. First, enhanced domestic monitoring efforts by nonpartisan groups contribute to more genuine election processes by encouraging fairer campaign practices and a more informed electorate, as well as by reducing the possibility of fraud and irregularities on election day. Second, domestic election monitoring can develop and strengthen institutions essential to the sustainability of a democratic political system. Monitoring efforts help citizens learn organizational skills necessary to participate actively and effectively in the political life of a country between elections. Groups that have formed to monitor elections have often developed into broader-based civic organizations, contributing to the development of civil society. This, in turn, has enhanced the prospects for greater political discourse, citizen involvement in governance and heightened public confidence in government.

Domestic, nonpartisan election monitoring should not supplant election monitoring and pollwatching by political parties and candidates for office. It is in the interest of political contestants to protect their rights and the rights of their supporters, to campaign vigorously, and to guard the integrity of the voting, counting and tabulation processes. Nonpartisan monitoring complements these efforts. NDI conducts programs on election monitoring and pollwatching for political contestants as well as on nonpartisan election monitoring for civic groups. Experience in these areas clearly demonstrates the advantage for the election process when many civic and political organizations participate.

The *Handbook* comprises three sections. The first chapter provides an overview of election monitoring by domestic groups. The second chapter traces the evolution of several nonpartisan, domestic monitoring organizations with which NDI has been associated. The final chapter, which constitutes the bulk of the text, presents practical guidance for developing an effective domestic monitoring operation. Various sample reports and forms are included as appendices, all of which can be tailored to fit the circumstances of a particular election.

This *Handbook* does not presume to provide the definitive interpretation of every election issue nor to present a complete approach to monitoring those issues. Each country is different, and every new election brings with it slightly different circumstances. Nonetheless, many common issues arise. In producing this *Handbook*, NDI has tried to put into writing some of the lessons it has learned from a decade of working with domestic election monitors. As you respond to the circumstances and issues surrounding elections in your country, we hope that you find the principles, issues, activities, guidelines and illustrations in this *Handbook* useful.

Readers of the *Handbook* are encouraged to contact NDI with any comments, suggestions or requests.

Kenneth D. Wollack
President, National Democratic Institute
June 1995

CHAPTER ONE

Monitoring
Elections

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹ (Universal Declaration) and various international treaties establish the right of citizens to participate in the governance of their country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. Article 21 of the Universal Declaration states in part that:

[T]he will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of a government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Other international instruments mirror and elaborate upon these rights. (See Appendix I) The precise characteristics of the right to participate in government and electoral rights are fully delimited in international human rights instruments, and the role of election monitors in guaranteeing these rights is no longer seriously contested.²

Article 7 of the 1990 Copenhagen Document of the then-Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) (now the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)), which calls on participating states to accept international and domestic election observers, affirms the proposition that election observers can play an important role in democratic elections. Observance of this policy is also routinely reflected in the practices of sovereign governments as well as the programs conducted by intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations.

Why Monitor?

The primary purpose of an independent monitoring operation is to guarantee the integrity of an election process. This objective exists whether the election occurs in a longstanding or in a new or transition democracy. Several related goals also justify the time and cost associated with initiating and implementing monitoring efforts.

Particularly significant in the context of transition elections is the role monitors play in reassuring a skeptical public about the importance of the electoral process and the relevance of each voter's participation. Often in these environments, the public's only experience with politics concerns human rights abuses, fraudulent elections and military or autocratic rule. In these circumstances, basic notions of civic responsibility need reinforcement, and anxieties must be overcome.

Publicity surrounding the formation of a monitoring operation, coupled with the pre-election activities of monitors and their presence at voting stations on election day, enhances public confidence and encourages citizen involvement in the process. Public statements and reports issued by the monitoring group may lead to changes in policies that promote a more equitable election process. Through the use of mediating techniques, monitors may help resolve disputes that emerge during the campaign period. Their presence at polling sites deters fraud, irregularities and innocent administrative mistakes. Deployment of election monitors to troubled areas also serves to discourage intimidation during a campaign and on election day. In addition, when observers monitor the vote counting process through an independent vote tabulation or other means, they provide an unbiased source for verifying official results.

Finally, a post-election evaluation conducted by an independent monitoring group may also influence the positions of electoral contestants regarding the overall legitimacy of the process. A relatively positive assessment should encourage acceptance of the results by all parties. By contrast, a negative critique may lead to rejection of the results if the process is deemed illegitimate.

Who Monitors?

Four categories of *domestic* groups, each with different roles and responsibilities, are involved in monitoring elections. (See Definition 1.) International actors complement the efforts of these groups, but

¹ See Appendix I.

² See generally, United Nations Centre for Human Rights, *Professional Training Series #2: Human Rights and Elections* (U.N., 1994); Y. Beigbeder, *International Monitoring of Plebiscites, Referenda and National Elections: Self Determination and Transition to Democracy* (International Studies in Human Rights, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Dordrecht 1994); G. Goodwin-Gill, *Free and Fair Elections: International Law and Practice* (Inter-Parliamentary Union, Geneva 1994); G. Fox, "The Right of Political Participation in International Law," 17 *Yale J. of Int'l Law* 539 (1992); T. Franck, "The Emerging Right to Democratic Governance," 86 *American J. Int'l Law* 46 (1992); H. Steiner, "Political Participation as a Human Right," *Harvard H.R. YB* 77 (1988). See also Appendix I.

cannot substitute for them absent extraordinary circumstances.

ELECTION OFFICIALS Election officials include national election administrators, regional election officers as well as voting-site and counting officials. The existence of impartial and well-trained election officials at all administrative levels usually decreases the need for developing an elaborate monitoring operation. Although these officials principally oversee the processes of organizing and implementing elections, they also have a duty to guarantee that the election conforms with the country's election law and applicable international standards.

Election officials face certain limitations related to monitoring elections, especially in transition elections. First, since election officials are typically responsible for administering the election process, it may be difficult for them to assess, objectively, their own work. Second, in many countries officials from the executive branch, the judiciary or the ranks of the ruling party are appointed to positions of authority in the election system. Their partisan affiliations may arouse suspicion of undue government influence and bias, thus diminishing their credibility as impartial monitors. Notwithstanding these limitations, election officials can serve an important role in election monitoring. (See *Illustration 1*.)

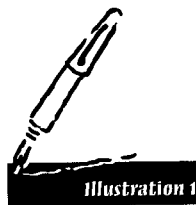
POLITICAL PARTIES Even in countries with longstanding democratic traditions, political party representatives are assigned to virtually all polling sites on election day. In addition to discouraging electoral manipulation, the presence of party pollwatchers demonstrates a party's organizational strength to prospective voters, which may accrue psychological benefits for a party engaged in a closely contested election. Party pollwatchers also provide political parties with an important and timely source of information regarding voter turnout during election day and election results after the polls close.

Party pollwatchers, however, represent *partisan* electoral contestants. (See *Definition 2*.) In the event of a dispute or irregularity, these pollwatch-



do•mes•tic

The term *domestic* is used in this text to refer to all people or groups originating within the country or territory in which elections are being held. Terms such as "indigenous," "national," "local" and "domestic" are commonly used interchangeably in the election monitoring context.



For South Africa's 1994 transition elections, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) was given broad responsibilities and powers. Obviously, most of the IEC's duties related to administering the elections. However, an independent directorate within the IEC was established for the sole purpose of monitoring and evaluating the election. Activities of the monitoring directorate included: investigating and enforcing alleged violations of the campaign Code of Conduct; overseeing compliance with prescribed procedures; and cooperating with domestic and international election observers.



par•ti•san

Partisan is used throughout this *Handbook* to refer to people or movements having a direct interest, stated or otherwise, in the specific outcome of the elections (e.g., political parties, candidates and political party activists). It may also describe activities that demonstrate a preference for certain election contestants. The term *partisan* is not intended to suggest any connection with particular historical movements or forces.

ers have a natural tendency to protect the interests of their party, candidate or issue. In a polarized political environment, the information collected and disseminated by political parties may be challenged as biased and untrustworthy.

LOCAL MEDIA The local media—television, radio, newspapers and magazines—also monitor elections. In addition to reporting on the election campaign and final results, the media investigate allegations of abuse, conduct pre-election polls, and establish mechanisms for quickly projecting and announcing election results. In the context of a first election, and particularly where the government owns or strictly controls major media outlets, the voters and opposition parties may perceive the media as biased. In other circumstances, the media refuse to dispense relevant information regarding the conduct of an election.

NONPARTISAN ORGANIZATIONS The perceived partisanship of election officials, political party pollwatchers and the media prompted the advent of monitoring by *nonpartisan* civic organizations. (See Definition 3.)

In most cases, nonpartisan civic organizations are more interested in the process than the outcome of an election. Consequently, if nonpartisan civic organizations develop an effective monitoring apparatus, their evaluation of an election process will be considered more reliable than one offered by a government-dominated election commission or by a party contesting the election. Moreover, domestic monitoring groups provide a neutral vehicle for organizing and engaging sectors of society that are otherwise unwilling or afraid to assume a partisan role in an electoral process.

The nonpartisan *bona fides* of domestic monitoring groups face constant challenge. (See Definition 4.) Many such groups are formed by individuals who have a long history of fighting against the incumbent regime for democratic change and respect for human rights. Still, as discussed in the next section, these groups can take affirmative steps to demonstrate their objective character and to ensure that their members remain nonpartisan.³

non • par • ti • san



Definition 3

Nonpartisan, as used in this Handbook, relates to actions and objectives that do not support or detract from any competitor in an election. Nonpartisan work is conducted in support of a democratic election process, without regard to who wins or loses. Domestic groups from Albania to Zambia have demonstrated that, notwithstanding the personal preferences or former affiliations of their members, they are capable of participating in political events, such as elections, while maintaining their credibility for nonpartisan conduct.

What is Monitored?

The increased attention directed toward fair election processes has also affected the scope of monitoring operations. No longer is the focus limited to observing activities on election day or during the tabulation process. Rather, effective election monitoring embraces a broader mandate that begins with writing the statutes that establish the election framework and concludes with resolving electoral complaints. Chapter Three, below, presents a detailed approach to monitoring an election process.

Creating the legal framework for an election provides the initial entry point for influencing the components of a fair election process. Political parties and independent monitoring groups often



Definition 4

bo • na fides

Bona fides is Latin, meaning "in good faith," and may be used in reference to an organization's qualifications, reputation for genuineness or sincerity.

³ See also Section E, *Credibility*.

attempt to affect the content of the law. The election law debate also affords the media an excellent opportunity to begin informing the public about the significance of an upcoming election.

The election law generally establishes who should be permitted to serve as election monitors and what rights or restrictions apply to the monitors' work. This subject has been the source of considerable controversy in many countries. Before the 1992 national election in Romania, for example, the accreditation of independent domestic monitoring groups dominated the debate concerning the adoption of a new election law, as the ruling party sought to limit access to polling sites only to individuals designated by political parties. Through concerted efforts, domestic monitors eventually secured legal status in Romania's 1992 local and national elections.

Monitoring operations—whether undertaken by political parties, the media or independent groups—should be active during the entire pre-election period. Once the legal framework is in place, monitoring groups should examine the procedures: to appoint election officials; to register parties and voters; to designate candidates; to enforce election campaign regulations; to conduct the voting and counting; to review complaints; and to install the election winner(s). The incumbent government, the security forces and government-controlled media may deserve special scrutiny given their potential for improperly using their status to influence large numbers of voters.

The balloting and counting processes usually form the focal points of a monitoring operation. A plan of action for deploying monitors on election day must be developed, taking into account available personnel, transport and other resources. Training personnel and preparing effective mechanisms for data collection are also essential to organizing a credible monitoring effort.

A monitoring operation does not end when polls close or even when the preliminary results are released. In the period following elections, monitors should investigate alleged election-day irregularities and complaints filed with the relevant election officials and the courts.

How Nonpartisan Organizations Monitor

Chapter Three details the myriad activities that domestic election monitors should consider pursuing. This section summarizes several guiding principles that may help nonpartisan civic organizations and their members conduct a successful monitoring effort.

Developing and preserving a reputation as a credible investigator and reporter of election events constitutes a goal of utmost importance. Generally, monitors must remain objective and impartial in all of their activities; they should be advised to refrain from expressing publicly any preference for a political party or candidate.

Monitors should also perform their work with diligence and thoroughness, researching and recording their findings in an objective manner. Personal observations and other credible sources of information may form the basis for conclusions about the elections. Monitoring efforts should avoid relying on untrustworthy sources of information, conducting incomplete, unbalanced or inaccurate research, or reaching and publicizing judgments prematurely, as each of these activities will damage the credibility of the operation. Monitors should document their observations so that they are verifiable and, in all instances, attempt to distinguish objective from subjective evidence.

How a monitoring organization decides to use its findings will affect the credibility with which resulting evaluations are received. It is generally advisable, therefore, to choose a path of moderation and discretion by avoiding unwarranted extremes and portraying findings in their proper context. Moreover, findings are likely to achieve greater influence if they are presented in a constructive, rather than purely critical, manner.

Monitors will further enhance their credibility to the extent that they publicize the objectives, methodology and findings of their efforts. Informing the public, the media, the government and political parties of the group's intentions and operating procedures diminishes suspicion and misunderstanding.

REMEMBER

- remain objective and impartial;
- conduct research and observations diligently and thoroughly;
- exercise moderation and discretion; and
- demonstrate the monitoring group's credibility by documenting and publicizing relevant objectives, methodologies and findings.

CHAPTER TWO

The Evolution
of Monitoring by
Nonpartisan
Domestic
Organizations

The February 7, 1986 snap presidential election in the Philippines dramatically altered the then-widely held perspective that election observing was inappropriate or ineffectual. In the Philippines, a well-trained and organized nonpartisan domestic monitoring operation demonstrated that it could, when complemented by large-scale international observer delegations, critically evaluate a fatally flawed process.

The importance of developing and nurturing local monitoring efforts was among the most significant and far-reaching lessons learned by NDI from its observation mission to the Philippine elections. Consequently, since 1986 NDI has encouraged the formation of nonpartisan monitoring organizations, trained thousands of domestic monitors and coordinated pre-election and election-day activities with domestic monitoring groups in more than two dozen countries. Many of the organizations with which NDI has worked in the context of first elections have endured beyond these contests, contributing to the development of democratic institutions in their countries.

The NAMFREL Model

A team of political and election specialists from NDI and what is now the International Republican Institute (IRI), visited the Philippines before the 1986 presidential election to assess the feasibility of mounting a credible international observer effort. The team's most productive and impressive meetings were held with leaders of the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), an organization formed 30 months earlier to promote electoral reform and to monitor elections. Unlike the many Filipinos who opposed participation in elections run by President Ferdinand Marcos, NAMFREL activists encouraged public involvement in the process as a vehicle for restoring democracy in their country. To this end, approximately 500,000 volunteers were recruited, trained and mobilized to monitor polling sites throughout the Philippine archipelago on election day.

Despite its initial reluctance, the team recommended that both institutes organize an international observer delegation based largely on the positive impression created by NAMFREL. Specifically, in developing a plan of action for the international observers, NDI and IRI relied on NAMFREL volunteers throughout the country to furnish information about political developments and to identify problem areas. NAMFREL's "operation quick count," which sought to collect and tabulate actual election results from all of the more than 85,000 polling sites, provided an essential mechanism for exposing the inaccuracy of the official results announced by the government-controlled Commission on Elections (COMELEC). The international observers, meanwhile, provided much needed support to NAMFREL both before and after the election, when COMELEC sought to revoke NAMFREL's accreditation and when the government alleged that NAMFREL pollwatchers acted in a partisan manner.

The NAMFREL monitoring operation identified and highlighted the electoral abuses committed by supporters of the incumbent president, and reported results suggesting a victory by Marcos' opponent Corazon Aquino. Consequently, a majority of the Philippine population and the international community rejected the official results reported by COMELEC. A military revolt supported by large segments of the public, coupled with international pressure, provoked Marcos to relinquish power and leave the Philippines for exile in the United States less than three weeks after the election.

Building upon the NAMFREL Experience

Following adoption of a new Philippine constitution in February 1987, legislative elections were scheduled for May of that year. NDI utilized the May polling to familiarize democratic activists in other countries with the Philippine experience. The activists, from nine countries, made up NDI's 24-member international observer delegation.

These delegates studied the work of NAMFREL and many returned home to initiate similar activities in their countries. While some efforts proved more successful than others, the strategy of mobilizing volunteers for a first election and developing nonpartisan approaches to political involvement has provided considerable momentum to democratic tendencies, even where immediate gains are less than obvious.

In Chile, for example, a massive civic education program undertaken by a nonpartisan organization, CIVITAS, encouraged prospective voters to register for the October 6, 1988 plebiscite, which determined whether President Augusto Pinochet, who seized power in a 1973 military coup, would remain in office for another eight years. In the days preceding the plebiscite, CIVITAS organized various activities designed to overcome the anxieties of many citizens who doubted the secrecy of their vote and who feared reprisals if they voted against the government.

CIVITAS also supported efforts by a committee of prominent Chileans to conduct an independent vote count. Although drawing heavily from the Philippine experience, the Chileans did not attempt to monitor every polling site. Instead, they utilized statistical sampling to project the outcome based on results from a randomly selected 10 percent of the polling sites. The highly accurate projection in the presidential plebiscite led monitoring organizations in other countries to employ parallel vote tabulations based on statistical samples instead of, or in addition to, the comprehensive count used by NAMFREL.

The Philippine experience also influenced developments during the period preceding the May 1989 Panamanian national elections. Business and church leaders formed an independent citizens group to pressure the government to conduct fair elections. For the elections, a church laity group implemented a parallel vote tabulation. This independent vote count proved critical in identifying the true winner of the presidential election during which the government initially sought to manipulate the results and ultimately nullified the elections.

Paraguay is another Latin American country where various domestic groups have played important roles in monitoring a series of elections

conducted since the overthrow of President Alfredo Stroessner in 1989. In addition to monitoring the balloting process and implementing parallel vote tabulations, groups such as the Center for Democratic Studies (CED) have been active in developing innovative civic education programs that inform citizens about their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society. By 1993, a coalition of diverse civic organizations named SAKA (meaning "transparency" in the native language) was developed to conduct an independent vote tabulation that confirmed the victory of Paraguay's ruling party candidate.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, Eastern Europe became the new democratic frontier. In Bulgaria, a group of student activists constituted the nucleus of the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections (BAFE), which formed 10 weeks before the June 10, 1990 parliamentary elections, Bulgaria's first multiparty contest since 1931. Overcoming government obstruction and a frightened population, BAFE mobilized more than 8,000 volunteers to monitor election-day developments throughout the country and to implement an independent vote tabulation. Though reputed to oppose the ruling party, BAFE insisted on remaining objective and impartial in its work. The parallel vote tabulation conducted by BAFE confirmed the victory by the incumbent, former communist Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP).

BAFE remained active following the elections, changing its name to the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECR) to reflect an expanded mandate. Before the October 1991 legislative elections, BAFECR aggressively promoted election law reform and implemented a civic education program throughout the country. The elections resulted in the BSP's narrow defeat, which was confirmed by parallel vote tabulations conducted by BAFECR and other organizations. BAFECR mobilized more than 9,000 election monitors for Bulgaria's 1994 national elections, organized a nation-wide program to encourage voter turnout and conducted numerous "candidate forums" (debates) before election day.

Domestic monitoring organizations have also emerged in other Eastern European countries,

notably Albania and Romania. The Romanian Pro Democracy Association (PDA) actively monitored the 1992 local and national elections, despite efforts by the parliament to deny 7,000 PDA monitors access to the polling sites. Since these elections, the PDA, through its more than 30 chapters throughout the country, has promoted government transparency and communication between the citizenry and its elected representatives. The Albanian Society for Free Elections and Democratic Culture (now known as the Society for Democratic Culture or SDC) formed in February 1992 and played an important role in deterring abuses during the March 1992 elections, which removed from power the long-ruling Albanian Party of Labor (later renamed the Albanian Socialist Party.) SDC monitored local elections and the constitutional plebiscite in 1994, and maintains an active program for citizen participation in public affairs.

The 1989 constituent assembly elections in Namibia represented a precursor to the democratic surge on the African continent. Again, domestic monitoring groups featured prominently in this development. The Namibian Council of Churches played a particularly important role in documenting incidents of intimidation during the period preceding the elections. A second organization, Namibia Peace Plan 435, conducted a civic education campaign and monitored the government-controlled media.

The Study and Research Group on Democracy and Economic and Social Development in Africa, a pan-African civic organization known by its French acronym GERDDES-Afrique, also emerged as a leading proponent of domestic monitoring efforts, as part of a general mandate to encourage more democratic development in the region. In 1991, GERDDES-Afrique organized a delegation to observe the Benin's national elections in March, which resulted in the ouster of the incumbent president. With chapters in more than a dozen African countries, principally in the French-speaking west, GERDDES organizes local and regional monitoring efforts and conducts training programs for election officials and pollwatchers. GERDDES played an important role

in the 1995 elections in Niger and Benin, working with international organizations to train nonpartisan domestic monitors, party pollwatchers and election officials.

In English-speaking Africa, the Zambia experience has proven influential. The Zambia Independent Monitoring Team (ZIMT) formed several months before the 1991 presidential and legislative elections, but failed to obtain the trust of key Zambian institutions, most notably the churches. Ultimately, a second organization, the Zambian Election Monitoring Coordinating Committee (ZEMCC), was organized, the board of which included representatives of six Zambian organizations. Both ZIMT and ZEMCC trained and deployed election monitors throughout the country to help implement a parallel vote tabulation. The results of the parallel tabulation were instrumental to the work of the international observer delegation jointly sponsored by NDI and the Carter Center of Emory University.

The Zambian monitoring activity enhanced the confidence of the citizenry, which was participating in multiparty elections for the first time in more than 18 years. In the presidential election, Frederick Chiluba, a long-time labor activist, overwhelmingly defeated Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia's president since the country gained independence in 1964.

The National Election Monitoring Unit (NEMU) in Kenya, the Group of Independent Observers in Burundi and the Public Affairs Committee in Malawi all developed effective domestic monitoring operations for recent election exercises in their countries. Each group relied on the ZEMCC model, whereby church-affiliated organizations assume the leading role in supplying personnel, infrastructure support and recognized credibility to the monitoring operation. Domestic monitoring exercises in Africa have more recently been successful in South Africa and Ethiopia as well.

Despite the success of NAMFREL in the Philippines, Asia represents the region where the experiences of domestic monitoring groups is most mixed. For example, South Korean church groups were unsuccessful in convincing

international observers of the nonpartisan *bona fides* of their efforts during the December 1987 presidential election.

Bangladeshis, however, succeeded in mounting a monitoring effort in 1991. Several nonpartisan groups organized for the February legislative elections, with the number of monitors recruited by each group ranging from a few to several thousand. Some of the groups have remained active following the elections, with changed names and mandates. For example, a coalition of civic organizations, the Fair Election Monitoring Alliance, has made preparations to monitor 1995 national elections.

In the Middle East, the National Committee for Free Elections (NCFE) recruited more than 4,000 volunteers to monitor Yemen's April 27, 1993 elections, the first multiparty elections in the country's history. The government purposely sought to limit the NCFE's effectiveness by creating a competitive organization and denying NCFE representatives access to polling sites. Nonetheless, the operation proved a major success in a region where democratic tendencies are not yet well developed.

Consolidating Fragile Democracies

The summary above illustrates the important contribution made by domestic, nonpartisan monitoring groups in promoting fair election practices in their countries. In accomplishing their objectives, these groups have overcome suspicions by governments and ruling party leaders, established nonpartisan *bona fides*, and obtained the personnel and financial commitments required to implement an effective monitoring operation.

The long-term sustainability of these organizations deserves special emphasis. In January 1993, NDI sponsored a seminar in Washington, D.C. for 15 organizations originally formed to

monitor or support multiparty elections in their countries. The participants addressed the challenges involved in maintaining civic organizations in a non-election setting, including maintaining organizational momentum, retaining volunteers and raising funds. Participants also described various post-election activities that have been undertaken by their organizations.

The collective experience of these groups demonstrates their concrete and sustained contribution to the democratic process in their countries. Those interested in promoting more democratic systems of government, therefore, should place a high priority on supporting the emergence of such organizations, including providing financial and political support. Furthermore, sharing experiences among and furnishing technical resource materials to those interested in organizing a nonpartisan monitoring effort for elections have often proven to be the most direct forms of assistance.

POST-ELECTION ACTIVITIES FOR CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

- promoting election law reform;
- implementing civic education programs;
- monitoring human rights;
- encouraging the participation of women in the political process;
- providing legal assistance to citizens on issues relating to privatization and land concerns;
- working with nongovernmental organizations to support civic advocacy groups at the provincial and local levels; and
- fostering transparency and accountability in government.

See *Chapter Three, Section Z, Final Considerations* for further discussion of this subject.

