



ANNOUNCEMENT

ADVISORY: COMELEC Issues Guidelines for Mass Media Accreditation and Accreditation of Domestic and International Observers/Monitors for the 09 May 2022 National Elections

The Philippine Embassy in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman wishes to announce that the Commission on Election (COMELEC) has issued the following:

1. **Resolution No. 10739:** Guidelines for Mass Media Accreditation for the May 9, 2022 National and Local Elections; and
2. **Resolution No. 10740:** Guidelines for the Accreditation of Domestic and International Observers or Monitors for the May 9, 2022 National Elections.

The said Resolutions are annexed to this Announcement. Please note that the last day for the filing of application for the accreditation of media entities and practitioners and accreditation for both foreign and local observers or monitors is on 11 March 2022.



Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Intramuros, Manila

EN BANC

**GUIDELINES FOR MASS
MEDIA ACCREDITATION
FOR THE MAY 9, 2022
NATIONAL AND LOCAL
ELECTIONS.**

ABAS, Sheriff M.	<i>Chairman</i>
GUANZON, Ma. Rowena Amelia V.	<i>Commissioner</i>
INTING, Socorro B.	<i>Commissioner</i>
CASQUEJO, Marlon S.	<i>Commissioner</i>
KHO, Antonio Jr. T.	<i>Commissioner</i>
FEROLINO, Aimee P.	<i>Commissioner</i>

x-----x Promulgated: December 9, 2021

RESOLUTION NO. 10739

WHEREAS, it is expected that the conduct of the May 9, 2022 National and Local Elections will be the subject of massive media coverage by *domestic* and *foreign* media, including both mainstream and alternative media;

WHEREAS, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), as the sole government agency charged with the conduct of honest, orderly and peaceful elections has a substantial interest in maintaining the orderliness and credibility of elections;

WHEREAS, the proliferation of amateur media enthusiasts and independent media practitioners may be used as a means to mask the operations of certain individuals or groups who intend to undermine the orderliness and credibility of elections;

WHEREAS, accreditation shall ensure the integrity of individuals or groups performing media functions during the elections;

WHEREAS, duly accredited members of the mass media shall be given free access to polling places, voting centers, and canvassing centers for purposes of observing and reporting on election events and processes;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the powers vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code, Republic Act No. 7166 and other election laws, the COMELEC has **RESOLVED**, as it hereby **RESOLVES**, to promulgate the following guidelines:

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the COMELEC to ensure accurate reporting on the conduct and results of the elections by providing maximum access to all stages of the electoral process to accredited media practitioners, subject only to conditions essential for the protection of COMELEC personnel, property, privileged information and integrity of the elections and

compliance with the relevant guidelines of Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-MEID).

SECTION 2. Definitions. – As used in this Resolution:

- a) **Foreign Media** refers to those who are engaged in news reporting for and on behalf of a foreign media corporation or entity, regardless of their individual nationality;

Visiting Foreign Media refers to foreign media who are not based or who does not have a bureau/office in the Philippines and will only come to the Philippines for the purpose of covering elections;

- b) **Local Media** refers to those who are engaged in news reporting for and on behalf of a local media corporation or entity, regardless of their corporate or investment structure including correspondents of, and freelancers on assignment for, regional, provincial, city or municipal publications or broadcast entities; *except* that local media who operate in the National Capital Region (NCR) shall be considered as National Media as defined below;

- c) **Media practitioner** refers to a person or group of persons actively engaged in the pursuit of information gathering and reporting or distribution, in any manner or form, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Bloggers
- Community Journalists
- Documentary Makers
- Feature Film Makers
- Novelists
- Online Journalists
- Photo Journalists
- Playwrights
- Print Journalists
- Professional Photographers
- Professional Videographers
- Public Relations Contractors
- Radio Journalists
- Screenwriters
- Television Journalists
- Television Productions

- d) **National Media** refers to those who are engaged in news reporting for and on behalf of a local media corporation or entity with online or print publications, or which engages in radio/television broadcasting, with national circulation or viewership, including provincial correspondents of, and freelancers on assignment for national publications or broadcast entities;

- e) **Other Media** refers to those engaged in *other* forms of journalism, *including, but not limited to,* opinion writers, public relations practitioners, creative writers, bloggers, feature film and documentary film makers, and the like; and

- f) **Freelancer** refers to those who do not work full time for a media company but is hired by different media companies for certain assignments.

SECTION 3. General Requirements for Accreditation. – Media practitioners, whether foreign, local, or national media, applying for accreditation shall submit the following:

- a) A fully accomplished COMELEC Media Accreditation Form(CMAF);
- b) Two (2) recent 1.5”x 1.5”colored photographs; and, where applicable, an endorsement from the publisher, editor-in-chief, assignment editor, station manager, or similar officer of the newspaper, television station, radio station, or online publication employing the applicant;
- c) An endorsement from the appropriate officer of the broadcast entity or film distributor which has committed to air/distribute the work; and
- d) In the case of freelancers, a valid assignment letter from the *bona fide* media organization for which the freelancer is on assignment.

Endorsements from any person other than those mentioned above shall not be honored: *Provided*, that the application of freelancers whose previous accomplishments are highly visible, respected and widely recognized need not be endorsed.

A freelancer shall be accredited only if he or she qualifies under either of the following:

- a) Must be on assignment for a professionally recognized organization, provided, that the request for accreditation shall be made by the organization he or she is representing; or
- b) Must have previous accomplishments which are highly visible, respected and widely recognized.

The application for accreditation of a freelancer need not be endorsed, but the application must be made by the organization he or she is representing.

In addition, media practitioners engaged in blogging and online publications shall be subject to the following requirements:

- a) Submit the URL of the online publication or blog showing the applicant’s name or listing the applicant as part of the reporting team for that site;
- b) Submit a copy of regular online articles or blogs related to the topic of politics, elections, governance or other related topics, by-lined or published on the applicant’s or similar online sites or blogs in the last six months;

- c) The website or online publication should be updated at least once a week with contents which are original, dated and extend beyond links and forums;
- d) No personal websites, fan sites, forums, and sites containing personal diaries will be eligible for accreditation. Only website editors and writers shall qualify for accreditation; and
- e) Blogs must be well established, updated at least once every two weeks, contain content on politics, elections, or related topics, and show an acceptable level of readership. Commercial or company blogs are not eligible for accreditation.

Online publications which are communications outreach or advocacy publications of non-governmental organizations do not qualify for media accreditation.

SECTION 4. Specific Requirements for Accreditation of Visiting Foreign Media. – In addition to the requirements mentioned in the immediately preceding section, all visiting foreign media seeking accreditation – including reporters, correspondents and stringers, cameramen, photographers and other members of the news/editorial staff of foreign wire agencies, regardless of nationality, shall submit individual or group endorsements from the embassy or consulate with *jurisdiction* over the foreign media entity or organization they are representing or are on assignment for.

SECTION 5. Period for Filing Application for Accreditation. – The period for the filing of application for accreditation shall be from the effectivity of this Guidelines up to **March 11, 2022.**

SECTION 6. Filing of Applications for Accreditation. – Applications for media accreditation shall be filed at the following offices:

- a) Applications for accreditation of **national media, foreign media** and **other media**, both domestic and foreign, such as novelists, screenwriters, playwrights, and those involved in the production of feature films and documentaries shall be filed at the **Education and Information Department (EID)** via **online** through the following links:

For National Media and other media: <https://bit.ly/2022NLENationalMedia>

For Foreign Media: <https://bit.ly/2022NLEForeignMedia>

- b) Applications for accreditation of **local media** shall be filed at the **Office of the Provincial Election Supervisor(OPES)** concerned, by submitting the prescribed application form for accreditation of **Local Media** together with the requirements, personally or through an authorized representative. Said application form can be downloaded at the COMELEC website.

Applications with incomplete requirements shall not be processed.

SECTION 7. Approval of Applications for Accreditation. – Approval of applications for accreditation is hereby delegated by the Chairman to the:

- a. Director IV of the COMELEC-EID- for national media, foreign media and other media; and
- b. The concerned PES - for local media

SECTION 8. Report on Actions Taken on Applications for Accreditation. – Within seven (7) days from March 11, 2022, the PES shall furnish the EID, via e-mail, a list of all applications received, indicating the status of each individual application, whether approved or denied.

SECTION 9. Media Card. – Upon approval of the application, the EID and PES shall issue media cards to all accredited media practitioners. Media cards must be claimed, personally or through an authorized representative, from the EID, for national, foreign and other media; and from the concerned OPES, in case of local media.

The COMELEC media card is strictly *non-transferable* and is valid only for the purpose for which it was issued. It shall be worn prominently whenever the media practitioners are covering or observing any official event, open to the public, relating to the elections for which accreditation was sought.

Improper use of the media card, or use thereof not in accordance with these guidelines, shall be considered abuse of the accreditation and carries the penalty of summary *revocation*.

SECTION 10. Access. – Duly accredited media shall be allowed maximum access to all stages of the electoral process, including but not limited to preparatory activities, command conferences, and other related activities organized and conducted by any of the COMELEC's Accredited Citizen's Arms and Deputies, subject to such conditions as may be necessary for the protection of COMELEC personnel, property, privileged information and integrity of the elections and compliance with the relevant guidelines of Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-MEID), PROVIDED FURTHER that the COMELEC Media Accreditation shall not be used to undermine any of the protections mandated by Republic Act 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

All COMELEC officials shall honor the accreditation passes of accredited media personnel subject to the conditions stated in this Section.

SECTION 11. Rules of Conduct. - All accredited media shall observe the following rules of conduct:

- a) Respect the authority of the Electoral or Canvassing Board with regard to the number of accredited media which shall be allowed inside the polling place or canvassing center at any one time;
- b) Immediately identify themselves upon entry into the polling places, before the Electoral Board by presenting their media cards and a negative RT-PCR test or antigen test taken within the last seventy-two(72) hours prior to election day;
- c) Strictly observe the minimum health protocols and other prescribed safety measures as stated in the relevant guidelines of Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-MEID), COMELEC and concerned local government units.
- d) Maintain professionalism at all times. Unprofessional activities shall not be tolerated. The accreditation of any media practitioner found to have engaged in any unprofessional activity shall be summarily revoked by the Electoral or Canvassing Board where the activity complained of is committed, by confiscating the media card of the offender;

Unprofessional activities shall include, but shall not be limited to:

- 1. Any behavior deemed disruptive of the conduct of voting, counting, or canvassing, such as, but not limited to, conducting interviews inside the polling place or canvassing center;
- 2. Engaging in partisan political activities, which refer to acts designed to promote the election or defeat of a particular candidate or candidates to public office;
- 3. Any behavior intended to unduly influence the choice of voters, such as, but not limited to, directly swaying the voter to speak for or against a candidate;
- 4. Distributing campaign materials;
- 5. Refusal to submit to the authority of the Electoral Board members or the Department of Education Supervisor Official (DESO) of the voting center or of the Canvassing Board of the canvassing center where the coverage is being conducted; and
- 6. Any behavior deemed unlawful.

The revocation shall be noted in the Minutes of Voting and Counting, stating therein the reasons therefor.

- e) Unaccredited media shall be allowed access to the polling place only at the exclusive discretion of the Electoral Board.

SECTION 12. Effectivity. – This Resolution shall take effect immediately after its publication in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation.

SECTION 13. Dissemination. – The Executive Director shall furnish copies of this Resolution to the Office of the President, the Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO), the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Philippine Information Agency, and all mass media organizations.

The Department of Foreign Affairs shall furnish copies of this Resolution to all foreign embassies and consulates.

The EID shall cause the publication of this Resolution in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation and shall furnish copies to the Regional Election Directors, Provincial Election Supervisors and the Election Officers.

SO ORDERED.

SHERIFF M. ABAS
Chairman

MA. ROWENA AMELIA V. GUANZON
Commissioner

SOCORRO B. INTING
Commissioner

MARLON S. CASQUEJO
Commissioner

ANTONIO T. KHO, JR.
Commissioner

AIMEE P. FEROLINO
Commissioner

CERTIFICATION

APPROVED by the Commission En Banc during its special online meeting on **December 9, 2021**, pursuant to Comelec Resolution No. 10671, “Supplemental Resolution No. 9936 promulgated March 25, 2015, Rule on the Enactment and Promulgation of Executive or Administrative Resolutions providing for other format of meetings to include online meetings applicable in times of the COVID-19 pandemic and the imposition of Community Quarantines and similar emergency situations.”


ATTY. CONSUELO B. DIOLA
Acting Comelec Secretary



Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Intramuros, Manila

EN BANC

**GUIDELINES FOR THE
ACCREDITATION OF
DOMESTIC AND
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OBSERVERS/MONITORS
FOR THE MAY 9, 2022
NATIONAL AND LOCAL
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ABAS, Sheriff M.	<i>Chairman</i>
GUANZON, Ma. Rowena Amelia V.	<i>Commissioner</i>
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KHO, Antonio Jr. T.,	<i>Commissioner</i>
FEROLINO, Aimee P.	<i>Commissioner</i>

x-----x Promulgated: December 09, 2021

RESOLUTION NO. 10740

WHEREAS, Philippine and foreignnationals, whether as individuals or in groups, whether representing governmental or private interests, are expected to observe and monitor the conduct of the May 9, 2022 National and Local Elections;

WHEREAS, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), as the sole government agency charged with the conduct of honest, orderly and peaceful electoral exercises, has a substantial interest in maintaining the orderliness and credibility of the elections;

WHEREAS, election observation and monitoring play an important role in providing accurate and impartial assessments about the conduct of the elections and has the potential to enhance the integrity of the electoral process;

WHEREAS, there is a necessity to provide for the accreditation and regulate the activities of domestic and foreign observers/monitors in the elections in accordance with established international standards on election monitoring;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the powers vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code, and other election laws, the COMELEC has **RESOLVED**, as it hereby **RESOLVES**, to promulgate the following guidelines:

SECTION 1. Definition of Terms.– As used in this Resolution:

- a) **Domestic observer or monitor** refers to any Philippine national, whether or not a resident of the Philippines, formally observing or monitoring the conduct of the elections.
- b) **Domestic group, organization, committee or association** refers to any group of individuals organized under the laws of the Philippines.
- c) **Foreigner or Foreign national** refers to any person whose nationality is other than Filipino, whether or not a resident of the Philippines.
- d) **Foreign group, organization, committee or association** refers to any group of individuals duly organized and existing under national laws other than that of the Philippines.

SECTION 2. Qualifications for Accreditation.– Applicants must have a *bona fide* intention to participate in the conduct of the May 9, 2022 National and Local Elections *exclusively* as *observers or monitors* of the electoral process, must be *free* from any political, economic or other conflicts of interests that would interfere with conducting observations/monitoring impartially, and must comply with the provisions of Sections 4 and 11 hereof. Applicants are required to disclose their intention to take part the conduct of the elections as *domestic or foreign observers or monitors*.

SECTION 3. Application for Accreditation.– Filipino or foreign nationals, whether as individuals or in groups, whether representing governmental or private interests, who are interested to observe or monitor the conduct of the May 9, 2022 National and Local Elections, shall file an Application for Accreditation at the following offices:

- a) Applications for accreditation of foreign observers and domestic observers with official addresses in the National Capital Region

shall be filed at the **COMELEC Education and Information Department (EID)** via **online** through the following links:

For foreign observers: <https://bit.ly/2022NLEForeignObserver>

For domestic observers: <https://bit.ly/DomesticMonitorObserver>

- b) Applications for accreditation for domestic observers residing within the provinces in the region shall be filed personally or through an authorized representative at the **Offices of the Regional Election Directors (OREDs) concerned**. The prescribed application form for domestic observers is downloadable at the COMELEC website, www.comelec.gov.ph.

SECTION 4. Documentary Requirements.– The application shall be supported by the following documents:

- a. Duly accomplished application form for accreditation;
- b. Two (2) recent 1.5” x 1.5” colored photographs of the applicant;
- c. If foreigner or foreign group, organization, committee or association organization, endorsement issued by the ambassador or consul of the applicant’s home country; and
- d. Terms of Reference or similar document, explaining the purposes of the election observation mission.

Applications with incomplete requirements shall not be processed.

SECTION 5. Period for Filing Application for Accreditation.– The period for filing applications for accreditation shall be from the effectivity of this Guidelines until **March 11, 2022**.

SECTION 6. Approval of Applications for Accreditation.– The individual application forms shall be reviewed and evaluated by the EID and OREDs.

Approval of applications for accreditation is hereby delegated by the Chairman to the:

- a) Director IV of the COMELEC-EID-for foreign observers and domestic observers with official addresses in the National Capital Region; and to
- b) The concerned Regional Election Director (RED)- for domestic observers residing within the provinces in the region.

Within seven working days after the deadline, the REDs shall furnish the EID with the final list of applications for accreditation indicating the status of each individual application, whether approved or denied.

The EID shall furnish the Commission *en Banc* a list of the approved applications for accreditation.

SECTION 7. *Opposition to the Application for Accreditation.*— Any opposition to applications for accreditation shall be *filed* within *five (5) days* from *filing* of the application being contested. The opposition for accreditation shall be filed with the Office where the application being contested was filed.

SECTION 8. *Grounds for opposition.*—The opposition shall be filed on any of the following grounds:

- a) the applicant has a previous derogatory record; or
- b) any of the submitted documentary requirements is not authentic, falsified or contains any information which is false.

The Director IV of the EID or the Regional Election Director (RED) concerned shall resolve the opposition within three (3) days from the receipt thereof.

For this purpose, the EID and OREDs shall post an updated list of applicants at the bulletin boards of their respective offices.

SECTION 9. *Accredited Observer Passes.* — Upon approval of the applications for accreditation, the EID and OREDs shall issue the appropriate Accredited Observer Passes to the accredited observers/monitors.

SECTION 10. *Privileges.* — Duly accredited domestic or foreign observers or monitors shall have the following privileges subject to such conditions as may be necessary for the protection of COMELEC personnel, property, privileged information and integrity of the elections and compliance with the relevant guidelines of Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-MEID):

- Unimpeded access to all stages of the electoral processes;
- Unimpeded access to all persons concerned with electoral processes, including, but not limited to:

1. Electoral officials at all levels, upon reasonable requests;
2. Members of legislative bodies and government and security officials whose functions are relevant to organizing democratic elections;
3. All political parties, organizations and persons participating in the elections, in whatever capacity; and
4. News media personnel.

SECTION 11. Code of Conduct. – All duly accredited observers/monitors shall be deemed bound by the following Guidelines:

- a) Respect the authority of election officials and their duly accredited deputies at all times;
- b) Prominently display the Accredited Observer Pass, provided by the COMELEC, at all times;
- c) Refrain from interfering with, obstructing, or otherwise hampering the conduct of any election related activity, including preparatory and post-election activities;
- d) Maintain proper personal behavior and respect others, including exhibiting sensitivity to the country's cultures and customs, exercise sound judgment in personal interactions and observe the highest level of professional conduct at all times, including *leisure* times;
- e) Maintain impartiality and objectivity in carrying out the observation/monitoring mission; and
- f) Strictly observe the minimum health protocols and other prescribed safety measures as stated in the prevailing guidelines of Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-MEID), COMELEC and concerned local government units. As added measure, all observers, are required to present a negative RT-PCR test or antigen test taken within the last seventy-two (72) hours prior to election day to the Electoral or Canvassing Board where they will be observing.

SECTION 12. Summary Revocation of Accreditation. – The accreditation of any observer/monitor may be summarily revoked by the Electoral or Canvassing Board by confiscating the Accredited Observer

Pass, and removing him/her or the group from the polling station or canvassing center due to any of the following grounds:

- Any violation of the Code of Conduct.
- Any disruptive behavior by anyone in the group.
- Misconduct which may include but not limited to:
 - a) breaching or attempting to breach the secrecy of the ballot;
 - b) knowingly obstructing electoral proceedings;
 - c) asking electors about their voting preference while observing at the polling station.

The accreditation of the organizations may also be revoked if it refuses to promptly remove an observer found to be in breach of this Code from their list of nominated individuals.

The power of the Electoral Board to remove observers/monitors for misconduct is in addition to their general power to keep order at the relevant electoral proceeding.

SECTION 13. *Period of Validity of Accreditation.* - Accreditation of *domestic or foreign election observers/monitors* shall be valid from the date of the approval of the application until the *end of election period* or until June 8, 2022.

SECTION 14. *Prohibited Acts.*- It shall be unlawful for any domestic, foreigner, domestic or foreign group, organization, committee or association to:

- a) Aid any person or group of persons in whatever manner, directly or indirectly, relative to the conduct of the elections (Sec. 81 & 89, OEC);
- b) Take part or influence in any manner the conduct of the elections (Sec. 81 & 261 (j), OEC);
- c) Engage in partisan political activities, which refer to acts designed to affect the results of the elections (Sec. 79 (b), OEC);
- d) Contribute or make any expenditure in connection with any election campaign or partisan political activity (Sec. 81 & 261 (j), OEC);
- e) Enter any polling place without consent of the chairman of the Electoral Board concerned (Sec. 192, OEC);

- f) Mingle and talk with voters inside any polling place, or otherwise disrupt the proceedings in the polling place (Sec. 192, OEC);
- g) Threaten, intimidate, or actually causes, inflicts or produces any violence, injury, punishment, damage, loss or disadvantage upon any person (Sec. 261 (e), OEC); and
- h) Propagate false and alarming reports or information, transmit or circulate false orders, directives or messages relating to the conduct of the elections (Sec. 261 (z.11), OEC).

SECTION 15. *Penalty for Violation.* – Any violation of the immediately preceding Section shall be punishable as an election offense which, if found guilty, may be penalized by an imprisonment of not less than one (1) but not more than six (6) years and shall not be subject to probation. In addition, if the guilty party is a Filipino, the offender shall be sentenced to suffer disqualification to hold public office and deprivation of right of suffrage. On the other hand, if the guilty party is a foreigner, he shall be sentenced to deportation, which shall be enforced after the prison term has been served (Section 264, OEC).

SECTION 16. *Reportorial Requirements.* – Accredited domestic and foreign observers shall make a report to the Commission en banc of their observations in a conference for this purpose and/or written report submitted to the Office of the Chairman and the EID on or before the end of the election period or until June 8, 2022.

SECTION 17. *Effectivity.* – This resolution shall take effect immediately after its publication in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

SECTION 18. *Dissemination.* – The EID and OREDs shall implement this Resolution.

The Executive Director shall furnish copies of this Resolution to the Office of the President, the Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO), the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Philippine Information Agency, and all mass media organizations.

The Department of Foreign Affairs shall furnish copies of this Resolution to all foreign embassies and consulates.

The EID shall cause the publication of this Resolution in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation and shall furnish copies to the Regional Election Directors, Provincial Election Supervisors and the Election Officers.

SO ORDERED.

SHERIFF M. ABAS
Chairman

MA. ROWENA AMELIA V. GUANZON
Commissioner

SOCORRO B. INTING
Commissioner

MARLON S. CASQUEJO
Commissioner

(On Leave)
ANTONIO T. KHO, JR.
Commissioner

AIMEE P. FEROLINO
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ATTY. CONSUELO B. DIOLA
Acting Comelec Secretary