

Journalists covering elections should not pay any political price by accepting any inducement/gifts/cash.

6. Media should report accurately the election results as they emerge from Election Commission of Pakistan and should avoid publications/broadcasting incomplete and unauthorized election results pouring in from different constituencies on election day.
7. All media shall ensure that all their staff designate to cover election, including those working at local level are well trained and politically neutral.
8. Safety of journalists and media staff is paramount, all media and law enforcement agencies should take effective measures in this regard.
9. Candidates in elections shall not act as news anchors, interviewers or presenters of any type of programme during the election period.
10. Journalists covering elections should distance themselves from being an agent of any political party/candidate.
11. Journalists covering elections should not pay any political price by accepting any inducement/gifts/cash.
12. Media must offer an equitable space and time to major political parties/contesting candidates in any constituency.
13. Media should resist pressure whatsoever by any political party/candidate or their supporter for any favor with regard to elections. Likewise political parties/candidates and their supporters should keep their hands out of the affairs of the journalists and uphold respect of freedom of press.
14. Media shall give the audience regular information about appropriate websites or other information source listing all candidates taking part in the elections.
15. Media should act together to protect each other from acts of violence or political intimidation and ensure that fair and transparent systems are used for the allocation of state and political advertising related to the elections.

STEPS TO IMPLEMENT THESE MEDIA GUIDELINES ARE AS UNDER

a Having a statutory obligation to receive and decide public and private complaints in violation of identified benchmarks of media ethics for media coverage of elections, PCP shall act as a vanguard in protecting rights of media without sacrificing the true values of freedom of expression.

b PCP will set up a 'Press Monitoring Cell'.

c PCP monitoring cell will share gathered information with Election Commission, Journalists, media houses and relevant stakeholders to ensure free and fair elections.

d The PCP will prepare a pre and post-election monitoring report with regard to adoption and observance of the media guidelines for elections by PCP.

Note

These guidelines have been drafted by PCP after consultations with all the media stakeholders, including APNS, CPNE, PFUJ, PBA, EJNI, academia, Bar Associations and relevant civil society organizations, in Karachi, Lahore, Multan and Islamabad.

PCP believes that media exercises all its claims of freedom, independence and responsibility on behalf of people's right to know and efforts of all media should be focused on fulfilling its commitment towards society because the ultimate judge of media performance during elections are the people of Pakistan.



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Printing of this brochure is supported by

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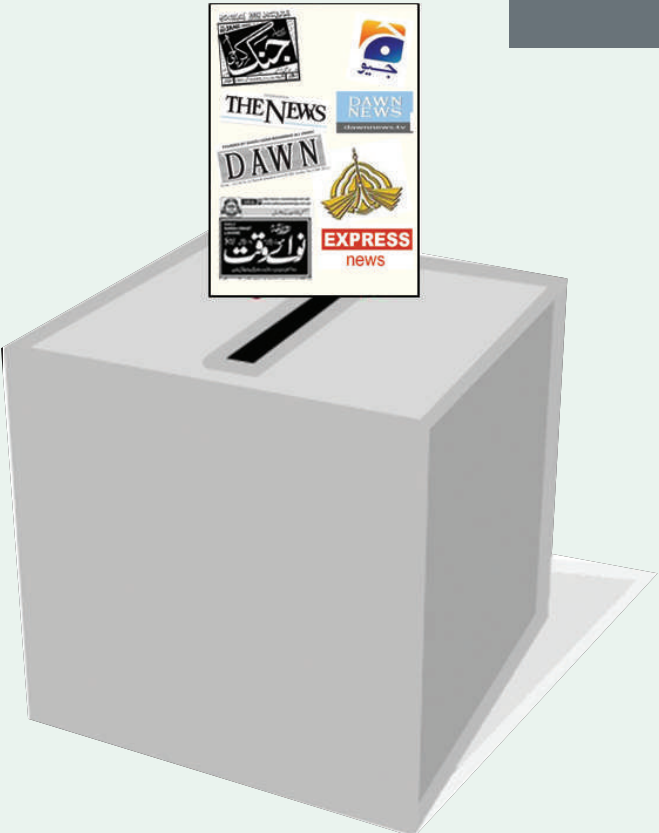
Media Guidelines for Reporting General Elections, 2013

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To harness Free, Independent and Responsible Media development in Pakistan freedom of expression has been guaranteed by the Article 19(A) of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. This constitutional guarantee coupled with section 8 (I) of the PCP Ordinance, the Council shall perform to help press to maintain its independence and to revise, update, enforce and implement the Ethical Code of Practice for media houses and media practitioners.

There are different sets of interlocking rights as media gears up its political socialization campaign that culminates in reporting Election Day event.

- a. Peoples' (voters) right to make fully informed choice before and during polls.
- b. Contesting candidates' right to put his/her political vision and policies across using media as a platform.
- c. Rights of media houses as corporate citizens of the land.



To ensure that these interlocking rights are not trespassed, media needs to strive at all times to;

- a. passing on credible information without favoring any candidate to people to enable them to make an informed choice.
- b. avoid discrimination against any political party, leader or candidate.
- c. protect free functioning of all media platforms while ensuring freedom of expression and upholding values attached to it.
- b. reach out to all communities without prejudice and making them aware of the election process and how they can freely exercise their right to vote.

Keeping in view values of fair, unbiased and ethical coverage of elections, media should ensure that:

- 1. The media shall apply principles of fairness in the allocation of time and space in provision of coverage to political parties and candidates while recognizing that balance and fairness are achieved over a reasonable period of time.
- 2. The media shall reflect the voices of men and women and opinions of all sections of society and all democratic groups that uphold the Constitution of Pakistan and law/rules of the country.
 - a) All media, both public and private, shall observe the distinction between advertising and editorial content and shall not allow forms of advertising or paid political promotion to be disguised as editorial content.
 - b) Paid political content must be identified as such.
 - c) A balance between broadcasting of paid for content and editorial content shall be maintained in line with agreed industry standards.

Safety of journalists and media staff is paramount, all media and law enforcement agencies should take effective measures in this regard.

3. Media shall encourage election participation and shall, in particular, discourage;

- a) all forms of rumors, speculation, sensationalism and disinformation, particularly when these concern specific political parties or candidates,
- b) publication of unsubstantiated allegations or personal remarks or opinions that are designed to be offensive and malicious and verify information regarding individuals or parties which is critical or negative before it is telecast, broadcast or published,
- c) all forms of hate speech that can be interpreted as incitement to violence or has the effect of promoting public disorder.

Media should report accurately the election results as they emerge from Election Commission of Pakistan and should avoid publications/broadcasting incomplete and unauthorized election results pouring in from different constituencies on election day.

- 4. This pledge to avoid inflammatory expression shall apply to coverage of political activities at all levels, including when it applies to the reporting of statements or remarks by political leaders or candidates.
- 5. The Media shall exercise caution in the use of opinion polls and surveys during electioneering process and especially close to Election Day. While publishing/broadcasting finding of opinion polls and surveys media shall indicate the number of people, geographical area on which the polls and surveys were based and the identity of the polls sponsor.