ANFREL Hopes for Free, Fair, and Safe Elections in Myanmar

As Myanmar, a country still in democratic transition, is set to hold its general elections on 8 November 2020, around 37 million registered voters are encouraged to stay the course and exercise their right to vote.

The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) calls on all election stakeholders to ensure that the 2020 Myanmar General Elections are free, fair, and safe amid the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ANFREL commends the Union Election Commission (UEC) and the people of Myanmar for rising above the challenge and making the elections happen despite the challenge of the global pandemic. ANFREL also recognizes Myanmar’s health authorities, police officers, media, and civil society organizations for their contribution to promote safe, peaceful, and transparent elections.

ANFREL encourages voters to go cast their ballots, while wearing masks, washing their hands, and practicing social distancing in line with the guidelines issued by authorities when they exercise their franchise rights. ANFREL also enjoins the UEC to uphold the safety of the voters and polling staff and protect the security of their ballots.

While the postponements of elections in several areas in the states of Rakhine, Shan, Kachin, Kayin, Mon, and Chin and in Bago region have caused the disenfranchisement of over 1.5 million voters, ANFREL hopes that the UEC will set up by-elections in these areas in due time to ensure the rights of these voters are upheld.

On Election Day, 24 ANFREL observers will be monitoring voting and counting operations across the country while complying with stringent internal policies and all government regulations designed to mitigate risks related to COVID-19.

ANFREL is scheduled to release and present its interim report during an online press conference held on 10 November 2020. The comprehensive final report will be released in the coming months.

As is standard practice, ANFREL’s methodology will adhere to international standards set forth in documents such as the Bangkok Declaration on Free and Fair Elections, the Dili Indicators of Democratic Elections, and the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation.
Formed in November 1997, the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) has established itself as the most prominent regional NGO in Asia working on elections and democracy promotion. ANFREL focuses on election observation as well as capacity building and development for national civil society organizations and election management bodies that are actively working on democratization in their home countries. Since its formation, ANFREL has operated in more than 65 elections in 17 countries across Asia. Our long-term aim is to build expertise on elections and governance in the region, entrenching a culture of democracy that is seen as locally developed rather than externally imposed. Through observing elections in other countries, our observers have developed a strong understanding of international best practices – knowledge that can then be applied in their respective home countries. Please visit www.anfrel.org for more information.

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