



## **NATIONAL CITIZENS' MOVEMENT FOR FREE ELECTIONS (NAMFREL)**

Room 601, DMG Center, Domingo M. Guevara St.,  
Barangay Mauway, Mandaluyong City 1550  
Philippines

Telefax: +63 (2) 8470-4151  
Wireless Landline: +63 (2) 8736-0969; 8788-3484  
Telephone: +63 (2) 8451-1586  
Mobile No.: +63 939.1102872; 977.2417080  
E-Mail: [namfrelsecretariat@namfrel.org.ph](mailto:namfrelsecretariat@namfrel.org.ph)  
Website: [www.namfrel.org.ph](http://www.namfrel.org.ph)

### **PRESS STATEMENT**

**25 April 2022**

#### **Power and authority should not be weaponized against the people**

The discharge of the Commission on Elections' duty under Section 2(1), Article IX-C of the Constitution and under the law to enforce and administer all laws relative to the conduct of elections for the purpose of ensuring free, orderly and honest elections does not escape public observation.

The absence or lack of transparency of the processes of the Commission, whether in relation to cases or petitions before it, or in relation to its preparations of the automated election system that will be used for the 2022 National and Local Elections, has been a concern.

Any action or series of actions taken by the Commission may be perceived differently by citizens and citizen groups, and may lead them to express their perceptions and opinions, in agreement with the Commission or otherwise.

While the Commission is authorized under Section 2(4), Article IX-C of the Constitution to "deputize, with the concurrence of the President, law enforcement agencies and instrumentalities of the Government, including the Armed Forces of the Philippines, for the exclusive purpose of ensuring free, orderly, honest, peaceful, and credible elections," the limits of exercising this authority is clear. It should not be weaponized against the people. After all, under the same Constitution, "sovereignty resides in the people and all government authority emanates from them" (Section 1, Article II).

There are election laws and processes in place to investigate and penalize election offenses, as well as to address election-related concerns. The focus ought to be on educating the public of these mechanisms, instead of resorting to warnings.

With less than two weeks before the elections, we urge the Commission to be more transparent in its actions, encourage the promotion of inclusivity and participation by initiating conversations with stakeholders, and provide clear information in response to any issues or concerns raised by citizens and/or citizen groups.

*NAMFREL is the first citizens-led, national election monitoring organization in the world. Since 1983, it has been accredited by the COMELEC as its citizens' arm. For the 2022 elections, NAMFREL has again been accredited, and has started fielding volunteers across the country to observe election-related activities. NAMFREL encourages non-partisan Filipinos to sign up as volunteers at [www.namfrel.org.ph](http://www.namfrel.org.ph), to officially represent NAMFREL in the different voting centers as election day observers.*