



DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & RELIGION

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Office of the Secretary

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PRESS RELEASE

MONITORING OF HUMAN RIGHTS DURING ELECTIONS VITAL

The seriousness of human rights violation during National Elections is something that requires a more collaborative effort from the Government, Development Partners, Donor partners, NGO's, Civil societies, Churches and human rights defenders to seriously address by coming up with effective systems to complement everyone's efforts when dealing with human rights.

It is said that violation of human rights during election period is very real and huge but they mostly go unnoticed or it is not addressed seriously.

Concerns were raised and highlighted by Human Rights Defenders during the three day training for Defenders in the Highlands region in Mount Hagen city on the 27-29 of March, 2017. The training held at Hotel Kiminiga was jointly organised by the Department for Community Development and Religion, UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights and OXFAM.

Total of 15 participants or Human Rights Defenders were given a chance to discuss election related issues concerning human rights and how human rights defenders can actively monitor through regular engagements and how their presence may strengthen the integrity of the electoral process and promote public confidence.

The participants agreed that the involvement of human rights defenders can equally serve as deterrent for violations before, during and after the elections.

It was also highlighted that human rights defenders through their advocacy efforts may play an important role in responding to human rights violations and intervene for corrective actions to ensure greater participation and non-discrimination.

Facilitator and Advisor to the UN Office of the Human Rights Commission, Mr Kedar Poudyal told the participants to identify the hot spot provinces during election, identify those areas that are more likely to be violated and come up with strategies that can be used for corrective actions to address human rights violation.

Two provinces identified that are more likely prone to human rights violation was Enga and Southern Highlands Provinces. It was highlighted that during Pre-Election period that the voter registration is always the first to be manipulated through corrupt practices such as candidates or sitting members getting their own people to roll out the voter registrations. Thus, creating ghost names for a particular district or LLG creating excessive voting opportunities.

While during the Election period, problems identified are isolation of polling booths, women and girls threatened and forced to vote against their will. And discrimination of the marginalised and vulnerable population during voting.

From the human rights issues identified during the group discussions and activities, Mr Poudyal made a recommendation for the human rights defenders in the Highlands to come up with Monitoring reporting system for the seven highlands provinces after the Post-election period.

He said only through this monitoring reporting system, they responsible government agencies with the assistance from the development partners can analyse and evaluate the election process and come up with effective strategies and mechanisms to address election related human rights issues.

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APPROVED FOR RELEASE BY

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SECRETARY

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