



NATIONAL CITIZENS' MOVEMENT FOR FREE ELECTIONS (NAMFREL)

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Press Statement

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Voting marred by violence and machine malfunctions

The National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) expressed concern over verified reports submitted by its volunteers with regard some incidents that took place during today's voting in connection with the May 13, 2019 Midterm Elections. While many of the verified reports concern procedural lapses that are administrative in nature, there have been incidents that could affect the integrity of the results of the election in specific areas.

Violence

NAMFREL volunteers reported violent incidents in Datu Piang and Matanog in Maguindanao which marred the voting process and resulted to people being unable to vote and observers being pulled out. In Sulu, violent altercations were reported in Panglima Estino, Patikul, Talipao, and Panamao. Reports of altercations between voters were also received from Basilan and Lanao del Sur.

Voter Disenfranchisement

Volunteers in Davao Oriental and Davao Occidental reported that voters just went home when they were unable to locate their precinct numbers, or could not find their names in the precincts where they have previously voted.

In Davao, Lanao del Sur, Cagayan de Oro and Basilan, there were reports of failure of the Voter Registration Verification Machines (VRVM) in pilot areas which prioritized the use of the machines, resulting to EBs reverting to the use of CVLs, causing delays in the process and longer queues.

VCM malfunctions

Vote Counting Machine (VCM) malfunctions in San Dionisio, Iloilo, and specific clustered precincts in NCR resulted to EBs reverting to manual form of voting. In some precincts, automated ballots already filled out with votes were requested to be set aside, to be fed to and scanned by replacement machines. In many cases, voters would not be around anymore when their votes are finally cast, although they were given the option to wait.

VCM malfunction occurred in different forms. Verified reports of NAMFREL volunteers from different parts of the country indicate specific forms of malfunction observed: machine freezing (stopped working); overheating; machines turning off by themselves; paper jams; valid ballots being rejected; ballot not fitting the VCM causing delay in the process. In Dinagat Islands and Surigao del Norte, volunteers reported observing VCMs that failed to produce voting receipts.

NAMFREL volunteers also reported lack of some election paraphernalia, as well as poor crowd management in many areas.

Unauthorized handling of election materials

In Santolan Elementary School in Pasig City, political party watchers handled the transfer of filled-out ballots from the precincts to a room on another floor of the school building without the accompaniment of independent election observers.

Vote buying

Election day vote buying were reported in Cagayan de Oro, Lanao del Norte, Davao Oriental, Davao Occidental, and Zamboanga del Norte.

Accessibility

Volunteers reported that in many areas, Emergency Accessible Polling Places (EAPPs) for PWDs, senior citizens, and pregnant women were not provided.

The National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) deployed around 25,000 volunteers across the country to observe the voting, counting and consolidations processes today. The volunteers have been using observation forms reflective of NAMFREL's more than 35 years of experience in monitoring Philippine and international elections, and informed and guided by international election standards. The NAMFREL National Operations Center in Mandaluyong City has been receiving reports of volunteers throughout the day, and will continue to do so for the remainder of the electoral process. NAMFREL will regularly release to the public updates on the field observations received. ###