



NATIONAL CITIZENS' MOVEMENT FOR FREE ELECTIONS (NAMFREL)

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Election Day report on the Special Election in the 1st District of Ilocos Sur

The special congressional election in the 1st District of Ilocos Sur for the position vacated by Rep. Ronald Singson has been peaceful, with no reports of violence or any untoward incident.

Turnout

Namfrel volunteers reported a voter turnout that was lower than expected, especially in the morning because of inclement weather. In the town of San Vicente, only about 60% of registered voters turned out to vote; volunteers reported similar turnouts in the other towns.

Vote buying

Namfrel, however, is concerned about the rampant vote buying that was reported to, and observed by, our provincial volunteers. In Vigan for example, representatives (not the elected officials) from barangays reportedly went house to house even as late as May 26 -- the last day of campaign -- to give money in exchange for votes. Namfrel's provincial chair reported that last week, barangay officials themselves were giving away money in exchange for votes for one of the candidates. Our chairperson also reported that the amount given to barangay captains was Php 3,000; Php 2,000 for barangay kagawads (councilors); and Php 250 for heads of families. There was no report whether votes were bought in kind.

For the town of Sta. Catalina, the Namfrel provincial chairperson was even advised this morning by a local Namfrel coordinator to not send volunteers anymore because "the position had already been bought."

Namfrel has always condemned the use of money politics in elections, and the utilization of barangays in vote buying, especially since barangays are supposed to be non-partisan.

As of 8:30pm, counting is still ongoing in some precincts across the district. Proclamation of the winner is expected by 12 noon, Sunday, May 29. ###