



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

## THE ELECTORAL INTEGRITY PROJECT

WHY ELECTIONS FAIL AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT

# Secure and Fair Elections (SAFE) Workshop

Model Curriculum

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December 2015



## Electoral Processes

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## Introduction

The Secure and Fair Elections (SAFE) workshop bridges theory and practice on a fundamental element of the electoral process: electoral security. Security is an essential part of the electoral process; at best, it supports the credibility and overall success of an election, and at worst it can discredit elections and make them meaningless.

The basic definition of “security” is the state of being free from danger or threat. Security is more than the absence of physical threat or an armed conflict; it is an environment where individuals can thrive and exercise their rights freely. It requires access to education and health care, democracy and human rights, and economic development. It is a state where citizens’ rights are enforced and citizens are treated fairly by state institutions.<sup>1</sup>

Security means different things to different people and institutions. Governments often focus on what makes the state secure—strong borders, a powerful military—but most people focus on day-to-day security for themselves and their families.<sup>2</sup> In practical terms, election security can be defined as the process of protecting electoral stakeholders, information, facilities, and events.<sup>3</sup> Security is a crucial condition in the context of elections; it assists in establishing an enabling environment that is conducive to holding a democratic poll.

This workshop intends to contribute to a holistic understanding of electoral security. The workshop material presents international experience and lessons

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1 Bastick, Megan and Tobie Whitman. *A Women’s Guide to Security Sector Reform*. Washington, D.C.: The Institute for Inclusive Security and DCAF, 2013.

2 Idem.

3 Fischer, Jeff. 2002. ‘Electoral Conflict and Violence: A Strategy for Study and Prevention’, IFES White Paper 2002-01. Washington, D.C.: International Foundation for Electoral Systems.

learned, along with phenomena such as social media, two-way communications, technology mapping, and the latest academic methodologies to analyse the integrity of (and threats to) electoral processes.

The materials have been developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) and the Electoral Integrity Project (EIP),<sup>4</sup> with contributions from highly experienced field experts on elections, security, media and technology. The content of the workshop is designed to benefit electoral practitioners, electoral management bodies' (EMBs) personnel, members of security forces as well as civil society, the media and other stakeholders in the electoral process.

SAFE is intended to be a living resource in which the modules can be combined for various workshops based on thematic needs. It can be implemented in either a regional or national setting.

SAFE at the regional level intends to bring together electoral administrators, security personnel, and other stakeholders to raise awareness about electoral security and bring together international experiences, comparative models from around the world, best practices, the latest information and communications technology (ICT) developments and cutting-edge technology trends.

The national-level workshop is designed to gather members of electoral administrations, security personnel, civil society, political parties, and the media to share knowledge and raise awareness of electoral security and international experience. An additional element is familiarizing participants with using risk assessment tools, building an electoral security plan and the interaction between security forces, media and civil society. The workshop introduces national stakeholders to international experiences and comparative models from around the world.

Since every election has different priorities and needs, each implementation of the workshop can tailor the modules and training sessions to the local context. The SAFE curriculum is flexible enough to adapt to different national and regional scenarios.

UNDP Asia Pacific and International IDEA welcome any questions or feedback on the content of the SAFE curriculum.

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<sup>4</sup> The EIP is an independent research project based at the University of Sydney and Harvard University, under the direction of Professor Pippa Norris.

## Overview

The SAFE curriculum is composed of fourteen theoretical modules and nine practical sessions:

- *Theoretical modules* introduce the concepts and foster debate in the audience.
- *Practical sessions* combine exercises and group work based on the theoretical modules. They also include group presentations of challenges faced in previous elections in order to encourage discussion about concrete and applicable solutions.

The information provided for each module includes learning objectives, suggested length, key issues to cover and a detailed outline with recommended resources.

The implementation of SAFE starts with a thorough assessment to determine the profile of the participants, the area's electoral and security challenges, needs, and the role of other stakeholders such as civil society and the media in order to design the workshop in a way that addresses the main issues facing the upcoming electoral cycle in each country or region.

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