

DOCUMENTING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN SRI LANKA

FILMING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CAN BE DANGEROUS: Be safe. Be ethical. Be effective.

PREP

Know your rights before you turn on the camera. Always respect voter privacy and assess risks to yourself, interviewees and communities before you film. Develop a security plan to protect your safety as well as the safety of those you are filming. Make sure your equipment is charged and in working order.

VERIFY

Your media is easier to verify if you document the date, time and location of your footage. If possible, turn on automatic date, time and GPS location capturing features or use ProofMode app. Alternately, film newspapers, street signs or landmarks. Document who is filming by saying your name into the camera or keeping a written record.

FILMING TIPS

Hold shots for at least 10 seconds. Keep the camera steady and move it slowly when changing positions. Avoid zooming in - this will blur your focus. Film from various angles to show the size of the crowd or the length of the voting queue. If safe, document incidents of hate speech, confiscation of cameras or mobile phones, the tampering of ballots or illegal obstructions of voting.



THE WHO

When possible, film incidents of voters being intimidated, arrested, attacked, or harassed. Show if voters were acting peacefully, inciting violence against minority groups or carrying weapons. If they were members of a group, film details like badges, flags, or stickers.

THE WHAT

If safe, get close-up shots of police vehicles, uniforms, badge numbers, indications of police rank and methods of communication. Capture other visual records such as bullet holes, tear gas canisters, and who was involved in the incident.



WORK AS A TEAM

If possible, work with a partner or a team to capture multiple angles of the same incident. A partner can also help keep you safe and watch for developing situations. If you are at risk of arrest and want to keep filming, consider giving your used media card to someone who can guard it and replace it with an empty card.



PROTECT IDENTITIES

Ensure those you film are aware of how and where the video will be used. Discuss potential safety risks if the video is to be shared publicly, online, or with the authorities.

If anonymity is needed:



Film interviewees' hands while they speak.



Adjust the focus to blur the image.



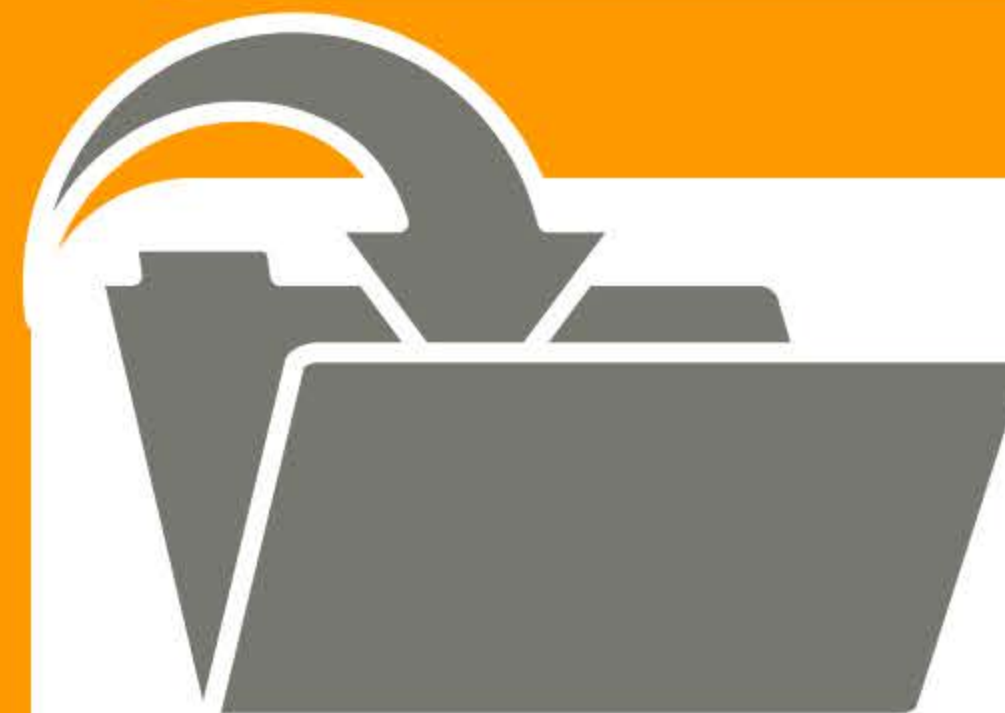
Have the interviewee cover their face.

TELL THE STORY

Do no harm. Do not get in the way of people needing medical assistance. Get permission from people before you film. Ask consenting individuals to describe the events taking place or relay their personal experience. Through their interviews you can expose irregularities



in the voter registration process, the persecution of activists or civil society groups, stories of sexual or gender based violence, or incidents of voter intimidation within the community or workplace.



PRESERVE YOUR MEDIA

Always keep your original media files in a secure location. When sharing your video online, include the date, time and location in the video's title and tags. Add details and contextualizing links in the description of the video. Keep one copy of your footage offsite. Do not make edits to the original file- always do so from a copy.

Be aware of local laws regarding filming and photography at polling places. Have the number of a local election monitor handy to report intimidation or violence.

