FILMING ELECTION OFFENCES ON POLLING DAY 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. Make sure your equipment is charged and in working order. Have an emergency contact number on hand.

**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. Alternately, film street signs, landmarks or nearby surroundings. 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, election offences, confiscation of cameras or mobile phones.

**THE WHO**
When possible, film incidents of voters being intimidated, arrested, attacked, harassed or turned away. Show if candidates and supporters were peaceful, inciting violence against minority groups, or carrying weapons. If violators were members of a group, film details such as 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 of any election offences and who was involved.
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 such as whether the polling station opened on time or if there was any confusion or disorganisation. 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. 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 may be able to expose irregularities during polling day, the persecution of activists or civil society groups, stories of sexual or gender based violence, or incidents of voter intimidation at polling queues or non-inclusion of the disabled community.

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 contextualising links in the description of the video. Keep one copy of your footage on-site. Do not make edits to the original file – always do so from a copy.

REPORT
Report any election offences to:
People’s Action for Free & Fair Elections
http://www.paffrel.com/send_reports-6b.html;
Transparency International
+94 76 322 3442/pppr@tisrilanka.org;
Centre for Monitoring Election Violence
https://cmev.org/contact/.