

# Election Observation

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# Purpose of Election Observation

- Assess electoral process according to domestic law and international standards
- If election reflects will of the people, build confidence in election's integrity and acceptance of electoral results
- If election is flawed, document how it falls short of democratic standards

# International Election Observation

- Legitimacy: government authority derives from citizens as determined in elections
  - Elections essential for democracy (representative government)
  - All “partly free” and most “not free” countries hold elections
- International acceptance
- Recognized international norm

# International Standards for Elections

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights: basis of government authority is “the will of the people ... expressed in periodic and genuine elections” with “universal and equal suffrage” and “held by secret vote”
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Inter-Parliamentary Union Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections

# Regional Recognition of Elections

- African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
- Southern Africa Development Community Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections
- Inter-American Democratic Charter
- Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Copenhagen Declaration

# Election Monitors

- *Party agents*: promote acceptance of results
- *Domestic non-partisan*: understand local conditions; have wide/comprehensive reach
- *International*: confer legitimacy; attract international media
- Domestic and international observation reinforce each other