

# WHAT IS CONFLICT?

*Conflict is a disagreement or clash between people or groups with opposing ideas, interests, or goals.*

Conflict is a normal part of society. Not all conflict is violent. Conflict becomes dangerous when it is poorly managed. Violence occurs when tensions escalate without dialogue or understanding.



## WHAT CAUSES CONFLICT?

- Scarce or unfairly shared resources
- Poor communication and misinformation
- Unresolved past grievances
- Unequal access to power and decision-making

## THE “DO NO HARM” PRINCIPLE

Journalism has impact.  
Words matter  
Language can calm tensions or fuel hostility.  
Images matter  
Visuals shape perception and emotion.  
Headlines matter  
They influence how people think and react.

# PRINCIPLES OF CONFLICT-SENSITIVE ELECTION REPORTING



## ACCURACY

1. Verify all information before publication.
2. Cross-check facts, figures, and claims, especially from political actors.
3. Avoid publishing rumours, assumptions, or unverified allegations.

## BALANCE

1. Give fair and equal representation to all political parties and candidates.
2. Avoid favouring one side through language, placement, or tone.
3. Separate facts from opinion at all times.



## INCLUSIVITY

1. Include voices of women, youth, minorities, and marginalized communities.
2. Focus on issues affecting citizens, not only political elites.
3. Ensure diverse perspectives are reflected in coverage.

## CONTEXT

1. Explain the background behind events, statements, and conflicts.
2. Help audiences understand causes, history, and implications.
3. Avoid reporting isolated incidents without explanation.



## RESPONSIBILITY

1. Consider the potential impact of your reporting on peace and public safety.
2. Avoid inflammatory language, hate speech, or sensational headlines.
3. Practice the “Do No Harm” approach in all election coverage.

**Conflict-sensitive election reporting protects democracy, public trust, and peace.**

# PRE-ELECTION REPORTING CHECKLIST

## A GUIDE FOR JOURNALISTS

*Pre-election reporting shapes public trust and voter participation.  
Journalists must provide accurate, timely, and verified information before voting day.*

### VOTER REGISTRATION



Report accurately on voter registration processes and timelines.  
Explain who is eligible, where to register, and required documentation.  
Highlight accessibility issues affecting voters.

### ECZ CALENDAR

Follow and report strictly in line with the Electoral Commission of Zambia timetable.  
Verify dates for nominations, voter registration, campaigns, and polling.  
Avoid publishing unofficial or speculative election timelines.



### POLLING STATIONS



Inform the public about polling station locations and access.  
Report on preparedness, accessibility, and any reported challenges.  
Avoid publishing information that may cause confusion or panic.

### CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Profile candidates fairly and based on verified facts.  
Report on manifestos, track records, and policy positions.  
Avoid personal attacks, rumours, or unverified allegations.



# ELECTION DAY DO'S

## A Guide for Journalists

**1**

### REPORT FACTS

- Report only what you see, hear, and can confirm.
- Focus on verified events at polling stations and official processes.
- Avoid speculation about turnout, results, or outcomes.



**2**

### VERIFY INFORMATION

- Confirm all claims with reliable and official sources.
- Cross-check incidents, complaints, or irregularities before publishing.
- Do not share unverified reports from social media or political actors.



**3**

### RESPECT VOTERS

- Protect voter privacy and secrecy of the ballot.
- Avoid interfering with voters or election officials.
- Report with sensitivity, professionalism, and respect for all citizens.



**4**

- Responsible election day reporting strengthens trust and protects democracy.





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and Defending Human Rights

# ELECTION DAY DON'TS

**ELECTION DAY REPORTING REQUIRES RESTRAINT, ACCURACY, AND PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT.  
WHAT JOURNALISTS AVOID PUBLISHING IS AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT THEY REPORT.**

## NO SPECULATION



**NO SPECULATION  
NO UNVERIFIED CLAIMS  
NO INFLAMMATORY LANGUAGE**

## NO UNVERIFIED CLAIMS

**DO NOT PUBLISH ALLEGATIONS WITHOUT  
CONFIRMATION.  
AVOID AMPLIFYING RUMOURS FROM SOCIAL  
MEDIA, PARTY AGENTS, OR UNOFFICIAL SOURCES.**



## NO INFLAMMATORY LANGUAGE

**AVOID WORDS OR FRAMING THAT MAY  
PROVOKE FEAR, ANGER, OR VIOLENCE.  
DO NOT USE SENSATIONAL HEADLINES,  
STEREOTYPES, OR DIVISIVE NARRATIVES.**

# POST-ELECTION REPORTING

## POST-ELECTION

Post-election reporting shapes public reaction and national stability.  
Accuracy and restraint are critical during this period.

## USE OFFICIAL SOURCES

Rely on verified information from authorized institutions.  
Avoid announcing results before official confirmation.  
Clearly attribute all figures and statements.

## REPORT PETITIONS RESPONSIBLY

Cover electoral petitions factually and without bias.  
Explain legal procedures and timelines clearly.  
Avoid framing disputes in a way that escalates tensions.

## AVOID SPREADING TENSION

Do not amplify inflammatory statements or accusations.  
Use neutral language in headlines and visuals.  
Report developments with context and balance.

RESPONSIBLE POST-ELECTION REPORTING  
PROTECTS PUBLIC TRUST AND PROMOTES STABILITY.



# ETHICS & SAFETY

ETHICAL JOURNALISM PROTECTS INDIVIDUALS, COMMUNITIES, AND DEMOCRACY.  
LANGUAGE AND FRAMING MUST NEVER ENDANGER PUBLIC SAFETY.



## NO INSULTS

- Do not publish offensive, degrading, or personal attacks.
- Focus on verified facts and public interest issues, not character attacks.



## NO STEREOTYPES

- Avoid labelling groups based on ethnicity, gender, religion, or political affiliation. Report individuals and communities with fairness and dignity.



## NO INCITEMENT

- Do not amplify speech that encourages violence, hatred, or hostility. Recognize that repetition of harmful statements can escalate tensions.



## ACTION

Ethical reporting prevents harm and upholds professional standards.



# **JOURNALISM IS NOT FOR SALE**

## ***Upholding Integrity in Election Reporting***

### **NO BRIBES**

Do not accept money, gifts, or incentives in exchange for coverage.  
Financial influence compromises credibility and objectivity.

### **NO FAVOURS**

Do not offer preferential coverage to any candidate, party, or stakeholder.  
Editorial decisions must be based on public interest, not personal relationships.

### **NO CORRUPTION**

Do not manipulate information, suppress facts, or distort narratives.  
Maintain professional standards at every stage of news production.

### **KEY MESSAGE**

Stay strong during setbacks and keep pushing forward with determination

## SAFETY FIRST

# Protecting Journalists During Election Coverage

No story is worth your life.

Safety must guide every reporting decision during the electoral process.



### RISK ASSESSMENT

Evaluate potential threats before covering rallies, protests, or volatile areas.  
Inform editors of your location and movement plans.  
Plan safe entry and exit routes.

### DIGITAL SECURITY

Protect devices, data, and communication channels.  
Use secure passwords and verify sources before sharing sensitive information.  
Safeguard confidential sources at all times.



### PHYSICAL SAFETY

Avoid hostile crowds and unsafe environments without support.  
Remain aware of surroundings and changing situations.  
Prioritize personal safety over exclusive coverage.

### KEY MESSAGE

Prepared journalists report safely and responsibly.



# VOTER RIGHTS

Journalists play a critical role in informing citizens about their rights during elections.  
Clear and accurate reporting protects democratic participation.

## RIGHT TO VOTE FREELY

Report that every registered voter has the right to choose a candidate without coercion or external pressure.  
Highlight and investigate any signs of undue influence.

## RIGHT TO VOTE SECRETLY

Emphasize that the ballot is confidential.  
Do not film, photograph, or expose how individuals vote.

## PROTECTION FROM INTIMIDATION

Report responsibly on incidents of threats, harassment, or voter suppression.  
Avoid sensationalism while ensuring accountability.

## KEY MESSAGE

Accurate reporting on voter rights strengthens trust and electoral integrity.

# WHAT VOTERS NEED TO CARRY

## Reporting Essential Voting Requirements

**01**

### **VOTER CARD**

Inform the public that voters must present a valid voter's card at the polling station.

Clarify official guidance from the Electoral Commission of Zambia regarding its use.

**02**

### **IDENTIFICATION**

Report accurately on accepted forms of identification, where applicable.

Verify requirements through official ECZ communication before publication.

**03**

Journalists must provide clear and accurate information on voting requirements to prevent confusion on election day.

**04**

### **KEY MESSAGE**

Clear reporting reduces confusion and supports orderly voting.

# DO'S AND DON'TS FOR VOTERS

## Reporting on Responsible Electoral Conduct

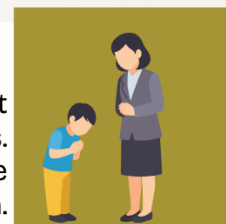


### FOLLOW PROCEDURES

Report on official voting procedures as outlined by the Electoral Commission of Zambia.  
Explain queue management, ballot handling, and polling station rules accurately.

### RESPECT OTHERS

Highlight the importance of peaceful and respectful conduct at polling stations.  
Avoid amplifying isolated incidents in ways that may escalate tension.



### REJECT MISINFORMATION

Encourage reliance on verified and official information sources.  
Fact-check and correct false claims that may confuse or mislead voters.

### KEY MESSAGE

Responsible reporting promotes peaceful and informed participation.



## Reporting on Responsible Electoral Conduct