



Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
 Intramuros, Manila



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GUIDELINES FOR MASS MEDIA ACCREDITATION IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAY 9, 2016 NATIONAL, LOCAL AND AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO (ARMM) ELECTIONS.

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Promulgated
 March 10, 2016

RESOLUTION NO. 10073

WHEREAS, it is expected that the 2016 National, Local and Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Elections will be the subject of massive media coverage by domestic and foreign media, including both mainstream and alternative media;

WHEREAS, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), as the sole government agency charged with the conduct of honest, orderly, and peaceful elections, has a substantial interest in maintaining the orderliness and credibility of elections;

WHEREAS, the proliferation of amateur media enthusiasts and independent media practitioners may be used as a means to mask the operations of certain individuals or groups who intend to undermine the orderliness and credibility of elections;

WHEREAS, accreditation shall ensure the integrity of the individuals or groups performing media functions during the elections;

WHEREAS, duly accredited members of the mass media shall be given free access to polling places, voting centers, and canvassing centers for purposes of observing and reporting on election events and processes;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the powers vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code, Republic Act No. 7166¹ and other election laws, the COMELEC has RESOLVED, as it hereby RESOLVES to promulgate the following guidelines:

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the COMELEC to ensure accurate reporting about the conduct and results of the 2016 National, Local and ARMM Elections by providing maximum access to all stages of the electoral process to accredited media representatives subject only to conditions essential for the protection of COMELEC personnel, property, and privileged information.

SECTION 2. Definitions. – As used in this Resolution:

- a) *Foreign Media* refers to those who are engaged in news reporting for and on behalf of a foreign media corporation or entity, regardless of their nationality;
- b) *Local Media* refers to those who are engaged in news reporting on a local scale, including correspondents of, and freelancers on assignment for, regional, provincial, city, or municipal publications or broadcast entities; *except* that local media who operate in the National Capital Region (NCR) shall be considered as National Media as defined below;
- c) *Media representative* refers to a person or group of persons actively engaged in the pursuit of information gathering and reporting or distribution, in any manner or form, including, but not limited to the following:
 - Blogger
 - Documentary maker
 - Feature film maker
 - Novelist
 - Online journalist
 - Photo journalist
 - Playwright
 - Print journalist
 - Professional photographer
 - Professional videographer
 - Public relations contractor
 - Radio journalist
 - Screenwriter
 - Television journalist
 - Television production

- d) *National Media* refers to those who are engaged in news reporting on a nationwide scale, including provincial correspondents of, and

¹ An Act Providing for Synchronized National and Local Elections and for Electoral Reforms, Authorizing Appropriations Therefor, and for Other Purposes promulgated on November 26, 1991.

freelancers on assignment for national publications or broadcast entities; and

- e) *Other Media* refers to those engaged in other forms of journalism, including but not limited to opinion writers, public relations practitioners, creative writers, bloggers, feature film and documentary film makers, and the like.

SECTION 3. General Requirements for Accreditation. – Media representatives applying for accreditation shall submit the following:

- a) a fully accomplished application form for accreditation;
- b) two (2), recently taken, 2" x 2" colored photographs; and, where applicable, an endorsement from the publisher, editor-in-chief, assignment editor, station manager, or similar officer of the newspaper, television, radio station, or online publication employing the applicant;
- c) an endorsement from the appropriate officer of the broadcast organization or film distributor which has committed to air or distribute the work; and
- d) in the case of freelancers, a valid assignment letter from the *bona fide* media organization for which the freelancer is on assignment.

Endorsements from any person other than those mentioned above shall not be honoured; provided, that the application of freelancers whose previous accomplishments are highly visible, respected and widely recognized need not be endorsed.

Freelancer shall be accredited only if he or she qualifies under either of the following:

- a) Must be on assignment for a professionally recognized organization; provided, that the request for accreditation shall be made by the organization he or she is representing; or
- b) Must have previous accomplishments which are highly visible, respected and widely recognized.

The application for accreditation of a freelancer need not be endorsed, but the application must be made by the organization he or she is representing.

In addition, media representatives engaged in blogging and online publications shall be subject to the following requirements:

- a) Submit the URL of the online publication or blog showing the applicant's name or listing the applicant as part of the reporting team for that site;
- b) Submit a copy of regular online articles or blogs related to the topic of politics, elections, governance or other related topics, by-lined or published on the applicant's or similar online sites or blogs in the last six months;
- c) The website or online publication should be updated at least once per week with contents which are original, dated and extend beyond links and forums;

- d) No personal websites, fan sites, forums and sites containing personal diaries will be eligible for accreditation. Only website editors and writers shall qualify for accreditation; and
- e) Blogs must also be well established, updated at least once every two weeks, contain content on politics, elections, or related topics, and show an acceptable level of readership. Commercial or company blogs do not meet the criteria for press accreditation.

Online publications which are communications outreach or advocacy publications of non-governmental organizations do not qualify for media accreditation.

SECTION 4. *Specific Requirements for Accreditation of Foreign Media.* – In addition to the requirements mentioned in the immediately preceding section, all foreign media requesting for accreditation – including reporters, correspondents and stringers, cameramen, photographers and other members of the news/ editorial staff of foreign wire agencies, regardless of nationality – shall submit individual endorsements from the embassy or consulate with jurisdiction over the foreign media entity or organization they are representing or are on assignment for.

SECTION 5. *Application Forms.* – Application forms for accreditation shall be available at the COMELEC Education and Information Department (EID), and in all COMELEC Field Offices nationwide. Application forms may also be downloaded from the COMELEC website (<http://www.comelec.gov.ph>).

SECTION 6. *Period for Filing Application for Accreditation.* – The period for filing application for accreditation shall be from 15 February to 28 April 2016. This period shall be non-extendible.

SECTION 7. *Personal Filing of Applications for Accreditation.* – Filing of applications for accreditation shall be made personally at the EID, for national and foreign media, and at the Office of the Provincial Election Supervisor (PES), for local media.

In the case of other media, both domestic and foreign, such as novelists, screenwriters, playwrights, and those involved in the production of feature films and documentaries, the filing of applications for accreditation shall be made personally at the EID.

SECTION 8. *Approval of Applications for Accreditation.* – Approval of applications for accreditation shall be made by the COMELEC Chairman, through the Director of the COMELEC-EID, for the NCR, and PES, for the local media.

SECTION 9. *Treatment of Applications for Accreditation.* – Within seven (7) days from the last day of the period for filing of applications, the PES shall furnish copies of all applications, with attachments, to the EID through facsimile, indicating which applications were approved and which were denied.

SECTION 10. *Media Card.* – Upon approval of the application, the EID shall issue media cards to all accredited media representatives. Media Cards must be personally claimed from the EID, in the case of NCR, and the PES, in the case of local media.

The COMELEC media card is strictly non-transferable and is valid only for the purpose for which it was issued. Any improper use of the media card shall be considered as abuse in the use thereof and carries with it the penalty of revocation.

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The media card shall be worn prominently whenever the media representatives are covering or observing COMELEC or electoral events.

SECTION 11. Access. - Duly accredited domestic and foreign media shall be allowed maximum access to all stages of the electoral process subject to the conditions essential for the protection of COMELEC personnel, property, and privileged information.

SECTION 12. Rules and Conduct. - All media representatives shall observe the following rules of conduct:

- a) Not more than three (3) media representatives shall be allowed inside the polling place at any one time;
- b) Upon entry into the polling places, media representatives shall immediately identify themselves to the Board of Election Inspectors (BEI) by presenting their Media Cards;
- c) Unprofessional activities shall not be tolerated. The accreditation of any media representative found to have engaged in any unprofessional activity shall be summarily revoked.

Unprofessional activities shall include:

1. Any behavior deemed disruptive of the conduct of voting, counting, or canvassing, such as, but not limited to, conducting interviews inside the polling place or canvassing center;
2. Engaging in partisan political activities, which refer to acts designed to promote the election or defeat of a particular candidate or candidates to public office;
3. Any behavior intended to unduly influence the choice of voters, such as, but not limited to, directly swaying the voter to speak for or against a candidate;
4. Distributing campaign materials; and
5. Any behavior deemed unlawful.

SECTION 13. Effectivity. - This Resolution shall take effect on the seventh (7th) day after its publication in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulations.

SECTION 14. Dissemination. - The Executive Director shall furnish copies of this Resolution to the Office of the President, Office of the Press Secretary, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Philippine Information Agency, and all mass media organizations.

The Department of Foreign Affairs shall furnish copies of this Resolution to all foreign embassies and consulates.

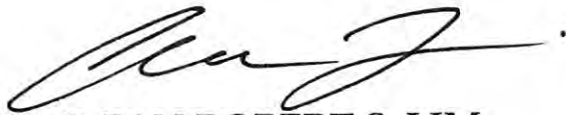


The EID shall cause the publication of this Resolution and furnish copies to the Regional Election Directors, Provincial Election Supervisors and Election Officers.

SO ORDERED.



J. ANDRES D. BAUTISTA
Chairman



CHRISTIAN ROBERT S. LIM
Commissioner



AL A. PARRENO
Commissioner



LUE TITO F. GUIA
Commissioner



ARTHUR D. LIM
Commissioner



MA. ROWENA AMELIA V. GUANZON
Commissioner



SHERIFF M. ABAS
Commissioner

5