TIPS FOR FILMING BANGLADESH NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION OFFENCES

Filming for human rights can be dangerous.
Be Safe. Be Ethical. Be Effective.
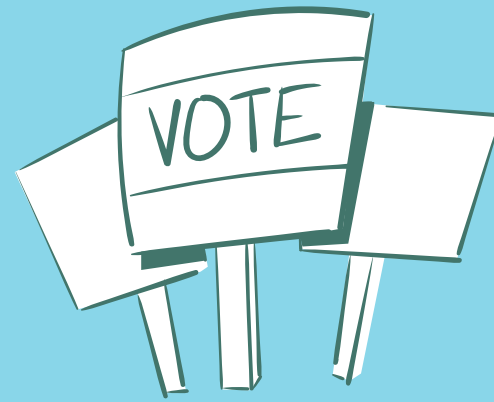
If you have any questions or feedback about this resource, or would like to share the tools and techniques that you use, please reach out to us on Twitter @WITNESS_Asia or fb.com/witnessasia.

This tipsheet has been developed in collaboration with Human Rights activists in Bangladesh.

PREPARE

▶ Know your rights before you turn on the camera. Always respect voter privacy and assess risks to yourself, interviewees and communities before you film.

▶ Assess any risks to yourself, to those you film, and to communities. Stay aware of the daily changes in the actions of the military, police, or provocateurs.

▶ Know your limits—both physically and mentally. Stay at the crowd's periphery instead of the center. Have a colleague keep watch while filming. Remember, safety should always come first.

▶ Create a WhatsApp/Signal group with your colleagues and ensure you have emergency contacts available for unexpected situations. It's recommended to use an encrypted app like Signal, which offers disappearing messages.
In situations of election violence, it's crucial to strategize your exit plan.

▶ Ensure your vehicle is easily accessible, and your designated driver/team is on standby. If possible, include your driver/team in your communication group. Remember, coordinating together ensures safer transportation and support amidst unrest.

PASSWORD PROTECT

▶ Password-protect your smartphone. Not fingerprint or facial recognition. Encrypt your smartphone or delete sensitive data if there is risk of confiscation.

CHARGE BATTERIES

▶ Charge your batteries and free up storage. Enable auto back-up, e.g., Google Photos, Dropbox in case the phone is lost / damaged / confiscated.

MAKE IT EASIER TO VERIFY AND PROVE ITS AUTHENTICITY

▶ To help news media, courts and human rights organizations verify your video and prove it's real, turn on GPS (high accuracy) on smartphones. If safe to do so, speak into the camera/mobile phone to verify that you are the one filming. Say the date, time, location into the phone/camera. Confirm the location by filming street signs, intersections and Landmarks.

WARNING: If you need to be anonymous for security reasons, use a code name and don't capture your face/identity while filming.

▶ You can use apps like Tella or ProofMode to capture photos or videos with added metadata, including location details. This additional information embedded in your media helps verify the exact time, date, and place where it was taken, enhancing its credibility and reliability. Download Tella here: https://bit.ly/tella-app Download ProofMode here: https://bit.ly/proofmode-appWARNING: If you need to be anonymous for security reasons, use a code name and don't capture your face/identity while filming.

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GET A POWERBANK

▶ Consider getting a power or portable power station to charge your equipment during power outages.

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.

▶ Capture an establishment shot to depict the location of the incident (e.g., the signage of a polling station). This shot helps provide context to the situation being filmed regarding its specific location.

▶ Ensure to capture at least one wide or mid-range shot before zooming in for a closer shot when filming election offenses. This technique provides context and a broader view before focusing on specific details.

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.

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 noninclusion of the disabled community.

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.

▶ Alternatively, use a blurring tool afterwards to protect people if you are not filming live. Below are some tools you could use.

YouTube (browser-based):
https://bit.ly/youtube-blurring

Blur tools for signal:
https://www.signal.org/blog/blur-tools/

Anonymous Camera (iOS):
https://apple.co/3iZZ3Xx

WARNING! Having a smartphone/camera can make you a target. Keep a safe distance as some authorities will use their weapons to intimidate or attack those filming.

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.

THINK BEFORE YOU SHARE

▶ If you decide to share the video on social media, e.g., Facebook/ Twitter/Youtube, add a brief, descriptive title that states that you are sharing this to expose a human rights violation. If possible, provide a caption at the start of your video. This is important as it helps make sure it stays up on the platform as proof and is not removed because the footage is violent or graphic.

VOTE

WITNESS
SEE IT FILM IT
CHANGE IT