INDONESIA: TIPS FOR FILMING ELECTION OFFENCES

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WITNESS
SEE IT FILM IT CHANGE IT

Filming for human rights can be dangerous.
Be Safe. Be Ethical. Be Effective.

PREPARE

- Know your rights before you turn on the camera. Understand your rights as defined by the Indonesian Constitution. Do your research at local legal foundations, and stay in touch with human rights legal practitioners.

- Respect voter privacy and assess risks to yourself, interviewees and communities before you film. If you are a journalist, it may be useful to secure a media pass or an identity card, which grants your right to record political events, including elections. Stay in touch with community media or civil society organizations for support. Understand the potential dangers and plan accordingly.

- Keep aware of daily changes in the actions of the military, the police and other agitators. Familiarize yourself with the Indonesian Electoral Law of 2017 and Guidebook about reporting on elections by the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI).

- To use social media or to publish content online, it is best to use a VPN service. ProtonVPN is free and safe. If you need to be anonymous on social media, start by making a new account using TOR or an I2P connection to limit the disclosure of metadata during the account creation process.

WORK IN A TEAM

- Whilst recording, you will also need to be aware of your surroundings. Consider working in pairs or groups to increase your security and support. Plan and divide tasks between your team. Consider who will monitor the situation, who will be the videographer, who will help protect the videographer, etc. Decisions you make should be based on specific circumstances and depend on local conditions.

- Cultivate trustworthy connections within the community near the vicinity of the polling station, and engage with members of the election observers team to begin building a reliable network.

- Know your limits—both physically and mentally. Stay at the crowd's periphery and have a colleague keep watch whilst you film. Remember, safety should always come first.

- Create a discussion group using an encrypted service like WhatsApp/Signal/Wire with your colleagues. Choose one that allows disappearing messages. Ensure that you have emergency contacts available for unexpected situations.

- In situations of electoral violence, it is 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.

EQUIPMENT

- Prepare essential equipment such as a camera, a tripod, a smartphone, a smartwatch and an audio recording device. Filter your devices by removing sensitive materials.

- Password-protect your smartphone. Do not use fingerprint identity sensors or facial recognition. Encrypt your smartphone or delete sensitive data if there is risk of confiscation.

- Charge your batteries. Consider getting a power or portable power station to charge your equipment during power outages.

- Always carry backup batteries, memory cards and recording devices in case of equipment failure. Invest in high-quality, durable equipment suitable for challenging and volatile environments.

DATA PRESERVATION

- Free up storage space on your device. Store your materials on a memory card rather than using local memory in case of emergencies or if you need to conceal the external card.

- Enable auto back-up, e.g.Google Photos or Dropbox in case the phone is lost/damaged or confiscated. If it is possible, during filming, consistently backup recorded footage to multiple secure locations to prevent loss of footage in the case of theft or confiscation.

- Consider preserving the media for the long term. In the event of any unlawful activity at the polling station, the election committee can use this stored media as evidence in accordance with the General Election Commission Regulation/Peraturan Komisi Pemilihan Umum (PKPU).

VISUAL VERIFICATION

- To help news media, courts and human rights organizations verify your video and prove its authenticity, turn on GPS (high accuracy).

- If safe to do so, speak into the camera/mobile phone to verify that you are the one filming. Clearly state the date, the time and the location into the device.

- Confirm the location by filming street signs, intersections and/or landmarks.

- You can use apps such as Tella or ProofMode to capture photos or videos with added metadata, location, and any additional details to help verify the exact time, date and place your footage was captured.

CAUTION!
Having a smartphone/camera can make you a target. Keep a safe distance to stay clear of intimidation and/or attacks whilst filming.

If you need to be anonymous for security reasons, use a code name and do not capture your own face or identity whilst filming.

In certain instances, police and military personnel may conduct inspections of your mobile devices to check your apps, social media accounts, and/or files/media inside your phone.
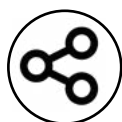
▶️ FILMING TIPS

- Do no harm. Get permission from people before you film. Ask consenting individuals to describe the events taking place or relay their personal experiences. Discuss potential safety risks if the video is to be shared publicly, online, or with authorities.

- Always keep a safe distance when recording electoral manipulation, violence and/or government officials' involvement. Record as much detail as possible when documenting human rights abuses and violations so that it will be easier to verify and authenticate at a later stage.

- Get a variety of shots (such as from a distance, aerial shots, slow-panning shots and tight shots) to capture the events effectively. Keep your phone/camera steady and move it slowly when changing framing positions.

- Document those affected, especially if they were targeted. To protect their identity, film crowds from behind and only record the backs of people's heads or their feet.

- Avoid zooming in if you can, as this blurs your focus. Get closer if safe to do so.

- Film in a way so that someone who is not present will be able to watch your video and understand what happened. Tell the story clearly.

- If filming interviews, ensure that those you film are fully aware of how and where the video will be used. 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 the non-inclusion of the disabled community.

- When it comes to filming sensitive details, protect interviewee, witnesses and/or victims. Conceal them and only use audio to obfuscate their identity.

- If anonymity is needed, film interviewees' hands while they speak, have the interviewee cover their face, or wear a mask. Alternatively, use blurring tools apps such as YouTube, Signal or the blurring feature in iOS.

- When safe, get detailed shots of perpetrators, whether they be army, police, or government officials, as well as the surrounding crowds. Shots of injuries, electoral manipulations or vote buying need to be clear. Whenever possible, make sure you get a clear and steady angle as well as clear audio. It is important to capture shots of specific details, such as badges, uniform ranks, vehicles, employee identity number or name tag and modus of operation.

- To maintain neutrality, avoid taking sides in a conflict during an election to minimize the risk of becoming a target. Cautiously record and provide facts. Be objective.

AT THE POLLING STATION (TPS or Tempat Pemungutan Suara)

- Whether during the campaign period or on voting day, be cautious of party members or party supporters. Throughout the campaign process, it is crucial to present only factual information, to maintain neutrality and to focus on recording any instances of unlawful activity.

- Take serious consideration of what should not be recorded inside the polling station: The entrance to the voting booth is a retractable curtain. According to the law, it is forbidden to record inside this room, even to capture your own vote (this is to prevent transactional money politics), and it is against the secrecy pillar of elections. That is why some election officers may suggest that voters store their phone outside the voting booth. It is also recommended that you refrain from uploading your vote ballot on social media, as it violates the secrecy principles of election, as per Article 2 Number 7 2017 of the Election Law.

THINK BEFORE YOU SHARE

- Before sharing, consider speaking with a trusted activist/media organization or international organization/lawyer.

- Think twice before uploading your videos or livestream on a public channel (e.g. Facebook/Twitter/Youtube) as it may turn you or victims and their communities into open targets. Always consider your own and others' safety before sharing your videos publicly.

- If you do decide to upload your videos directly to social media or stream them live, you may expose your location and risk being tracked down by viewers. Reconsider disclosing your location. Avoid sharing GPS or a photo of well-known landmarks.

- Remember that anyone can be identified by their voice, location, clothes and their

- companions, not just by facial identity. Decide if you need to edit out a section that creates more risk for someone or blur faces to help protect others.

- 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.

- If you can, tag someone outside the country and ask them to save the video.

- 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.

- As the election approaches, digital attacks will continue to increase, including against activists, journalists and civil society organizations. If you are a victim of a digital attack, please report it to local digital security service providers.

- Consider sharing using alternative platforms, such as sharing your media via secure messaging apps like Signal.

VPN & ROAMING SIM

- Assess your data and internet connection. If you can, be prepared with VPN and a roaming SIM in case of an internet shutdown. For more tips, check out our guide on documenting during internet shutdowns.

SOME USEFUL RESOURCES

• Fighting hoaxes, digital security violation:

On Social Media:

Mafindo

Masyarakat Anti Fitnah Indonesia

On Whatsapp:

Internet Sehat by ICT Watch - Indonesia

Komisi Pemilihan Umum Republik Indonesia (KPU RI)

Local Laws:

Criminal Procedure Law (KUHP)

Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE) 2024

• For Reporting Digital Attacks during 2024 Elections:

AJI Indonesia

SAFEnet

Tim Reaksi Cepat (TRACE)

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 or Facebook

Download and share this tipsheet in case of an Internet service shutdown or disruption.