

# Election Watch

Produced by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)

Issue No 2: 2019

## I'M GOING TO VOTE



**WHAT LANGUAGE/S WILL OFFICIALLY BE USED INSIDE A POLLING STATION?**  
English and vernacular languages.

**WHAT DO I NEED TO PRODUCE AT A POLLING STATION TO DEMONSTRATE ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE?**  
Voters must present their valid voter's card issued by the Electoral Commission of Namibia.

**HOW WILL I VOTE?**  
The Electorate will make use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in the upcoming Presidential and National Assembly Elections to cast their votes.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF I PRESS THE WRONG BUTTON – CAN I RECTIFY MY MISTAKE?**  
A voter can rectify their mistake if they have not pressed the red button on the ballot unit which confirms their vote cast. If a voter has made a mistake he or she can press the green button again to release that choice. Thereafter they can make a new choice by pressing the green button of a candidate or party of their choice again before confirming the vote by pressing the red button. If the red button is pressed the vote cannot be reversed or changed.

**WILL I BE ABLE TO VOTE IF MY NAME IS WRONGLY SPELT ON MY VOTER'S CARD?**  
YES, the ECN will use the biometric data stored in the bar code to ascertain the details of the voter.

**IS THE USE OF MOBILE PHONES, TABLET COMPUTERS OR CAMERAS ALLOWED IN THE POLLING STATION OR VOTING BOOTH?**  
The Electoral Law is silent on the use of these devices, however voters and officials are encouraged to switch off their phones in the polling station and the use of these devices is restricted.

**HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO VOTE?**  
It takes 3 and half minutes on average; this time is inclusive of voter verification.

**WHAT ARE ELECTRONIC VOTER VERIFICATION DEVICES (VVDS) AND HOW WILL THEY BE USED?**  
As part of the introduction of IT systems in the electoral processes, the ECN has decided to use electronic Voter Verification Devices (VVDS) throughout the country to verify if a voter is on the register. The VVDS will verify that the voter's card is valid and will note the constituency and region of the voter in comparison with the polling station that the voter decides to cast their vote.

**WILL IT BE POSSIBLE FOR ME TO CAST A BALLOT FOR PRESIDENT BUT NOT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, OR VICE VERSA?**  
YES, there will be two ballot units, one for the Presidential and one for the National Assembly election. So the voter can choose not to go to one of the ballot units if they wish.

**WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING TO THE POLLING STATION?**  
Party regalia are not allowed inside a polling station and any campaign material such as posters, banners and billboards should be kept at a 500 meter radius from polling stations.

**HOW WILL I KNOW THAT THE VOTE I CAST WILL BE RECORDED?**  
Once the voter has cast their vote by pressing the green

**button corresponding to candidate or party of their choice, the voter should press the red register button. A beep sound then signals to the voter that their vote has been recorded.**

**How many people are allowed in a voting booth?**  
Only one person is allowed in the voting booth if the voter does not require assistance and two will be allowed if the voter is being assisted.

**What happens if I am in the queue to vote when the polling station closes at 21h00?**  
If you are in the queue before 21h00 you will be allowed to vote. A police officer should go to the end of the line at 21h00 to prevent latecomers joining.

**Can I take a selfie of myself voting?**  
No, this is an offence under the Electoral Act. No one is allowed to take a photograph or record a video of him or herself voting or of anyone else voting.

This bulletin was compiled to cover Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the 2019 National Assembly and Presidential Elections. It is produced as part of the IPPR's Election Watch project with the support of the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives.

**Is Wednesday November 27 2019 a public holiday?**

Yes, the President has proclaimed polling day as a public holiday. Polling will be taking place from 07h00 – 21h00.

**Can I vote at any polling station?**

Yes. As long as you have a valid voter's card you can vote at any polling station in the country. In this case the vote you cast is called a tendered vote. However, such a vote is included in the return for the polling station where it was cast. The details for voters who vote outside their home

constituencies are recorded on a form called Elect 23.

**Can I be assisted at the polling station?**

On polling day the ECN provides the following assistance to voters: Priority access to polling stations for the elderly, pregnant women, parents with babies, and people with disabilities. Inside the polling station the Electoral Act says a voter who is incapacitated by blindness or other physical disability may ask a presiding officer or polling officer to assist them to cast a vote. A voter can also be accompanied by any other person of their choice, who can request the presiding officer to assist the voter or vote for them under their instruction.

The ECN's recommendation is that one individual should not be allowed to assist more than 10 people who are unable to vote on their own. This will be carefully monitored to avoid abuse.

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# VOTING WITH ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES (EVMS)

**How secure are EVMs from being tampered with? How possible is 'ballot stuffing' or 'election rigging' using EVMs?**

The EVM is a stand-alone machine consisting of two interconnected components. It cannot be accessed via any other means and it does not transmit any signal or connect to any type of network. The system software that operates the EVM is stored on a chip which is Read Only Memory (ROM) which is hardwired on to the planner board or motherboard at manufacturing. No one, not even the manufacturer can change or tamper with the system after manufacturing. After the preparation of the EVMs, they are sealed. A pre-poll test is also conducted an hour before the elections to ensure that all buttons are working and that at the end of the test there are zero votes on the machines which eliminates fears of vote "stuffing".

**Are the EVMs connected to a central server at the elections centre so that real-time monitoring of the elections can take place?**

The machines are stand-alone devices and are not connected to a central server. The ECN will use fax and email to transmit the results.

**How are EVMs powered and how long does the power source last?**

The machines are powered by batteries with a lifespan of at least 52 hours.

**How many EVMs will be in use? How many for the Presidential election and how many for the National Assembly election?**

The ECN will use 4554 ballot and control units for each election excluding EVMs kept in reserve for contingency purposes

**Will there be separate EVMs/voting booths for the Presidential and National Assembly elections?**

Yes, there will be separate voting booths for each election. You vote first in the presidential ballot and then for the National Assembly.

**Will there be a voter verifiable paper audit trail (paper record) of the votes cast via each EVM?**

No, not at this election. There is provision for the voter verifiable paper audit trail in the Electoral Act, but this section of the law has not come into force as yet.

## GOING THROUGH THE STEPS

HOW MANY PROCEDURAL STEPS WILL A VOTER ENCOUNTER INSIDE A POLLING STATION? WHAT ARE THEY?

### VOTER VERIFIER:

- Verify that the Voter Registration Card produced belongs to the voter.
- Verify that the identity of the voter is not questionable.
- He /She shall record on the electronic voters register or tick against the name of the voter from the manual voters register as proof that the voter has voted. The voter registration card shall be returned to the voter who shall then be directed to the inker.



### ULTRA VIOLET LIGHT CONTROLLER:

Screen the potential voters for any traces of invisible and indelible ink.



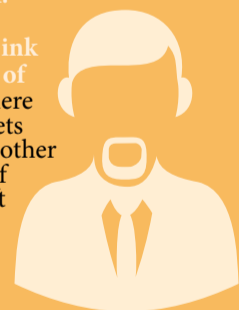
STEP 1

STEP 2

STEP 3

### INKER:

- Assist the voter to dip his/her finger tips (of both hands) in the invisible ink in the bowl.
- Apply indelible ink to the left thumb of voter, at the tip where the fingernail meets the cuticle or any other applicable finger if the voter has no left thumb.



STEP 4

### BALLOTS ISSUER FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION:

- Obtain the signature or thumb print and voter registration card number of each voter.
- Issue a ballot by pressing the ballot button on the control unit ensuring that the red busy light is on before directing the voter to the voting booth.



STEP 5

### BALLOT ISSUER FOR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTION:

- Obtain the signature or thumb print and voter registration card number of each voter
- Issue a ballot by pressing the ballot button on the control unit ensuring that the red busy light is on before directing the voter to the voting booth.





# THE ECN, POLLING STATIONS, OBSERVERS

## How independent and impartial is the ECN?

The Electoral Commission of Namibia is mandated to direct, supervise and control in a fair and impartial manner all elections conducted in terms of the Electoral Act. As an institution, the ECN continuously seeks to improve our electoral processes and practices at every opportunity and will learn from each electoral activity we undertake.

The ECN seeks to maintain a strong liaison with various stakeholders like political parties, civil society and faith-based organisations. It is through open and transparent dialogue with such stakeholders that ECN is able to deliver on its mandate effectively and efficiently.

## What measures have been taken to accommodate observers and/or party agents in polling stations?

The Electoral Act provides for the political party agents and observers to be present in polling stations and they get accredited accordingly.

## Who has access to polling stations as observers and how and who will grant accreditation?

International and local observers have been accredited and will have access to polling stations. The ECN invites local and international organisations and persons to apply for accreditation. Among the international groups observing this election are the SADC Electoral Observer Mission (SEOM), the African Union, and the SADC Electoral Commissions Forum.

## How should observers conduct themselves in or outside polling stations?

The observers subscribe to a code of conduct for observers in order to promote free and fair elections. They must remain non-partisan and not show any bias towards or against any political party.

## Who will be allowed into a polling station? And, who will be allowed into a voting booth?

Polling station: observers, party agents, voter(s), ECN officials, accredited media

Voting booth: the voter casting the vote. In certain instances where a voter needs help a person to assist with voting will be allowed to enter the voting booth on request of the voter.

## If irregularities are encountered at a polling station, who should be contacted or complaints be directed to?

Complaints should be directed to the Presiding Officer, who is required by section 204 (1) to record the incident in an occurrence book. Such books are held at polling stations and collation centres. The Presiding Officer, Returning Officer, counting officer, police officer, polling officer, staff member, or temporary staff member, election agent, counting agent, candidate etc. can record incidents in the occurrence book.

## Will there be a police presence at every polling station and if so, what will be the role of the police?

There will be two police officers deployed with each polling team. The role of the police is to ensure law and order at the

polling station and provide security for election materials.

## Given that the election is just one day, how many polling venues will each mobile polling station serve and how long will it be in each (average)?

The mobile stations cater for approximately 2-5 polling points, but this varies in the various constituencies depending on the geographical area.

## How will polling stations be in contact with the ECN elections centre and who will they report to?

The counting starts at the polling station after the close of polls. Results are displayed at the polling station and then the teams within a specific constituency travel to the constituency collation centre where results are collated, announced, displayed and transmitted to the ECN Central Electoral Results Centre in Windhoek.

# ELECTION OFFICIALS

## 1. HOW MANY POLLING STATIONS WILL THERE BE?

MOBILE STATIONS **2831** and FIXED **1410** polling stations **TOTAL: 4241** polling stations **POLLING TEAMS: 2277**

## 2. HOW MANY ELECTION OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN RECRUITED AND TRAINED?

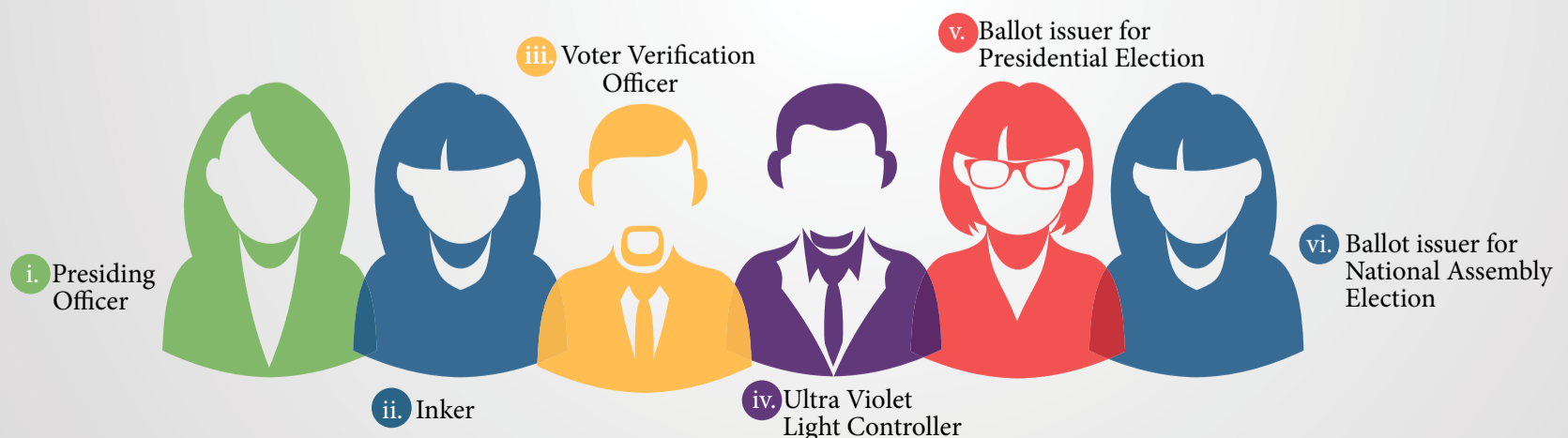
Some 16 668 officials have been recruited in the following categories:



• Training was cascaded and done in various phases.

## 3. HOW MANY OFFICIALS WILL BE ASSISTING A VOTER INSIDE A POLLING STATION?

The same numbers of officials constitute a polling team for both fixed and mobile stations.



# Counting the votes and announcing results

## HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE ANNOUNCED?

1. Votes are counted and announced at polling stations
2. Each Presiding Officer tallies the results at the polling station and announces results there at the polling station after the closing of polls.
3. Each Presiding Officer prints a copy of the results and posts it at the entrance of the polling station.
4. The polling station results are then sent to the Constituency Collation Centre for tabulation.
5. Each Presiding Officer provides the EVM Control Unit used at that particular polling station to be connected to Tabulators.
6. At a click of a button, these results are tabulated electronically and printed for announcement at that particular constituency.
7. The Returning Officer is required to tabulate results and announce results in the prescribed manner for both Presidential and National Assembly elections at the Collation Centre.
8. The Returning Officer transmits both results to CERC (Central Electoral Results Centre)
9. These results are then announced by the Chief Electoral Officer in the case of National Assembly results and the ECN Chairperson for presidential results. The ECN has said these results will then be posted on their dedicated results website and mobile app.

### How many collation centres will there be?

There are 121 constituency centres where collation of votes will take place.

### If EVMs are being transported to collation centres, how will the integrity of EVMs be ensured?

According to regulations on the safekeeping of EVMs, the sealed EVMs must be escorted by the Namibian Police. Details of the safekeeping are agreed upon by the Namibian Police Inspector General and Commission in concurrence with party agents.

### How long will it take to count the votes?

This depends on the size of the constituency and the distances involved. Polling station results should be available around an hour after the last person votes. Results at collation centres can take several hours as EVMs have to be transported there from various polling stations, some of which could be far away. At the last elections in 2014 it took two days for all the results to be confirmed. In theory, results should come through quicker than this and it should be possible to announce a final result by the morning of Friday November 29.

### What is the role of a collation centre?

The collation centre is the place where all the results from different polling stations in a constituency are collated. The Returning Officer verifies the correctness of the returns furnished by the Presiding Officers, collates the results for the constituency, and

compiles a report which will be transmitted to the Chief Electoral Officer in Windhoek. The Returning Officer also announces and posts the constituency result at the collation centre.

### Can mobile phones, tablet computers or cameras be used in polling stations and collation centres?

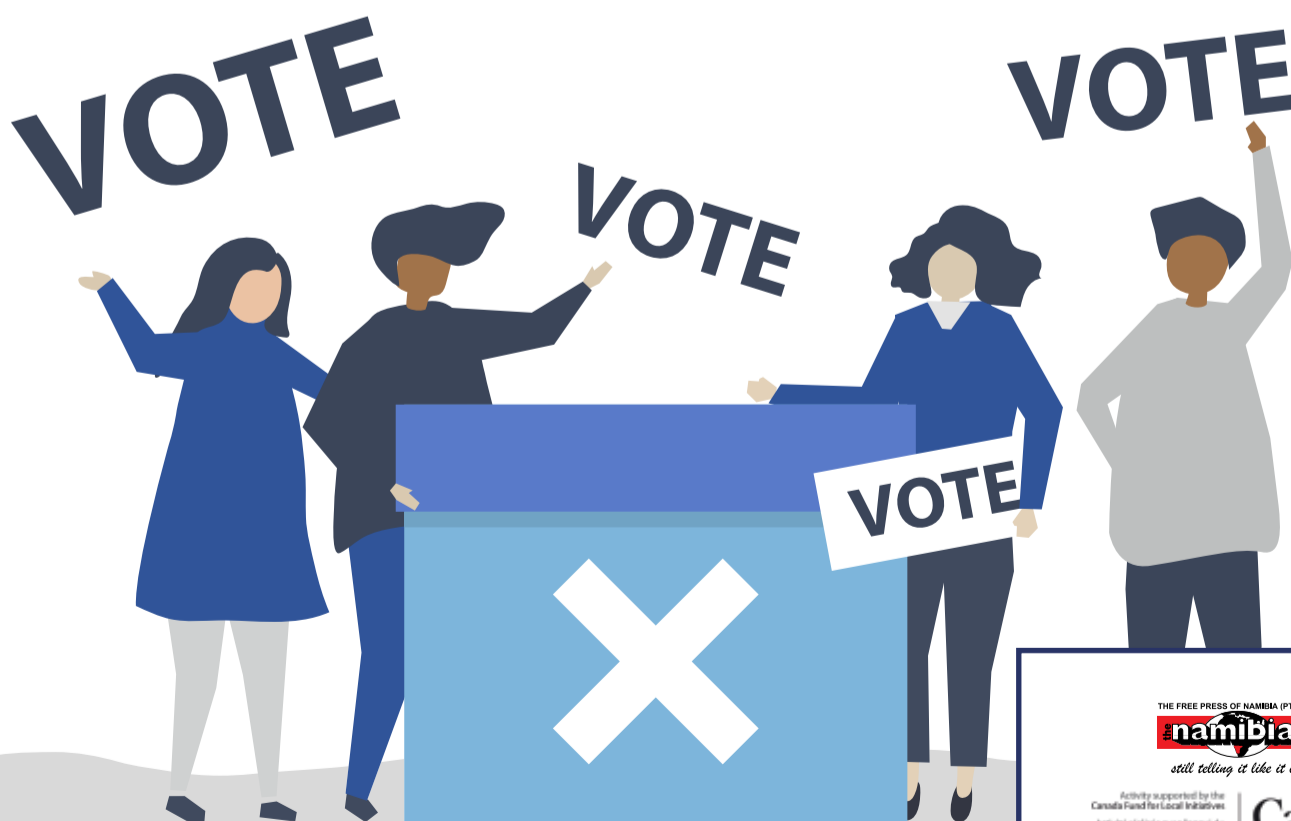
No. Use of these devices is discouraged although permission may be given by the Presiding Officer for the taking of photographs by accredited media and observers.

### What mediation measures/mechanisms are in place to deal with elections results disputes?

All matters arising before polling day in an election are adjudicated by an Electoral Tribunal and all appeals thereto addressed to the Electoral Court, but the Electoral Court must dispense with all such appeals before polling day. The Electoral Court is part of the High Court and has wide powers to adjudicate on a variety of matters, e.g. review decisions of the Commission, decide any matter concerning a contravention of the Electoral Act etc. The Electoral Court must conclusively determine all post-election matters seven days before the swearing in of the office bearers concerned. In any election of the President any challenge relating to the return or outcome of the election is directed to and adjudicated by the Supreme Court of Namibia as a Court of first instance and final recourse.

### How would a recount take place if EVMs do not have a paper trail?

After an election the control unit is connected to a printer and the number of candidates, the number of votes cast, the number of votes each candidate received etc. is printed out. Furthermore the court can also order that the data be retrieved in case of a dispute. The whole idea is that with the voting machines it should not be necessary to ask for a re-count since the possibility of human error is removed with the machine doing the counting.



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