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URGENT UPDATE RE HANDBOOK FOR COUNTING OFFICERS AND ENUMERATORS

A CHAPTER 3 PAGE 3 - PEOPLE ALLOWED INTO COUNTING CENTRE

- (i) All those listed in the manual
- (ii) The Media are not permitted inside the Counting Centre but should not be restricted (unless causing disruption), from entering any area up to the exterior of the counting Centre structure itself.

B CHAPTER 5 - PARTY VOTING AGENTS

- (i) The Presiding Officer has discretion to limit numbers for the orderly conduct of the poll but must permit a minimum of 7 party agents for each party if requested, to permit party agents to monitor the seven key activities which are:
 - a) receipt of the ballot boxes
 - b) the two reconciliation areas and
 - c) each of the four counting areas

C CHAPTER 7 - COUNTING STATION PROCEDURES

NOTE: Counting Centres are not permitted to accept voting materials from any voting station that is not located in the same district as the Counting Centre.

(i) Reconciliation:

This process has been complicated by the unforeseen adjustments to the voting process since the manual was printed. Because of ballot paper shortages and delivery problems, three special actions could affect the reconciliation process:

discontinuous from one day's voting on a subsequent day. In this case the Presiding Officer should have made a note that one or more partial books containing ballots were transferred to the subsequent day, and on the subsequent day, a note should be on the report, that a partial book of ballots was transferred from the previous day.

This procedure may not have been conveyed to all Presiding Officers and you may find that the number of ballots in the box may not reconcile with the ballot paper statements on any one day. However, if partial books have been transferred from day to day, the TOTAL of the ballots used, less all the spoiled ballots, should equate to the total number of ballots (national and provincial) over the three day voting period. You should therefore concentrate on the three day reconciliation where there is a significant difference in the daily reconciliations for any one voting station.

- b) Because of ballot shortages in certain areas, additional ballots had to be printed locally on an emergency basis. These were produced in packs of 100 but with no stubs. Therefore, in reporting the ballots used there will be no serial numbers indicated on the report form, and no way of reconciling by counting stubs. If the total ballots in the box, equals the total figure in the statement, the reconciliation is acceptable, as are all discrepancies which fall within the approved tolerance levels. However, if they do not reconcile, the only verification that can be carried out will be to recount the number of ballots in the box and to check the calculations and the addition on the ballot paper statement.
- c) Given the existing modifications, there may be increased situations where the reconciliation process may not balance or be within the approved tolerance of 0.5% or 1 ballot, whichever is more, taking into account all ballots cast over the three day period. In this event the report must be prepared as directed in the manual. The ballot boxes concerned for all voting days for that specific voting centre must not be mixed with others, but must be counted separately.

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ELECTORAL ACT, 1993

(2) No counting station shall be located at any premises ordinarily occupied by or under the control of any defence or police or armed force, or any political organization, save where the Commission may consider such premises to be a necessary location for the purposes of conducting a free and fair election.

Verification of ballot paper statement by counting officer

43. (1) After the provisions of section 38 have been complied with, the counting officer in the presence of the district electoral officer concerned shall examine whether the seals of the packets referred to in section 38 are intact and afford the district electoral officer concerned and any party voting agents who are present and such monitors and international and other observers as may be permitted by the Commission to be present, an opportunity to do likewise and shall thereafter

open all the packets.

(2) The counting officer shall separately verify each presiding officer's ballot paper statement referred to in section 38(2) by comparing it with the contents of the packets received from a voting station concerned, and shall for that purpose open all the ballot boxes from that voting station and cause the ballot papers

contained therein to be counted.

(3) The counting officer or enumerator shall examine each ballot paper to ascertain whether it bears the official mark.

(4) If there appears to be any-

(a) irregularity in respect of the seals;

(b) discrepancy in the verification of the ballot paper statement referred to in subsection (2); or

(c) ballot paper which does not bear the official mark, the matter shall be recorded, the Chief Director shall be informed forthwith and the counting officer shall deal with the matter in the prescribed manner.

Counting of votes

44. (1) After the provisions of sections 38 and 43 have been complied with, the counting officer shall forthwith cause—

(a) the ballot papers to be sorted with due regard to the provisions of subsections (3) and (4) on the basis of the individual votes cast for each registered party; and

(b) the votes cast to be counted in respect of each registered party.

(2) The counting officer shall, as soon as practicable, after all the votes at such counting station have been counted and the number of votes in favour of each registered party has been determined, inform the Chief Director in the prescribed manner of the number of yotes so determined to have been cast in favour of each registered party.

(3) The counting officer shall reject and not count any ballot paper—

(a) on which is cast votes for more than one registered party;
(b) in respect of which he or she has reasonable grounds to believe that it has not been officially issued to a voter in terms of this Act;

(c) which is unmarked or on which it is impossible to determine with certainty in favour of which registered party the vote is cast; or

(d) which does not bear the official mark on the back thereof.
(4) Subject to subsection (3), the counting officer shall not reject and shall cause to be counted any ballot paper on which there is a mark or writing by means of which a voter has clearly indicated his or her choice otherwise than by a cross on

the ballot paper concerned.

(5) In the event that the acceptance or rejection of a ballot paper by the counting officer, as the case may be, is disputed by any party voting agent, the counting officer shall endorse thereon the word "disputed" and shall reflect such ballot paper on a form and in a manner prescribed, and shall keep separately the

accepted and rejected ballot papers disputed.

(6) The counting officer shall endorse the word "rejected" on any ballot paper 55

rejected in terms of subsection (3).

(7) When the counting officer has complied with the provisions of this section and section 45 he or she shall, as soon as practicable, enclose in separate packets—

(a) all counted ballot papers;