

The background features a complex geometric pattern of overlapping purple and white shapes. A prominent white diagonal line runs from the top-left towards the bottom-right. A purple diamond is centered in the upper half of the page. The text is positioned in the white space on the right side of the page.

COMPENDIUM OF GOOD PRACTICES

**VIRTUAL ELECTORAL
ASSESSMENT MEETINGS**

2021-2023



Introduction

The years 2020 and 2021 were atypical. According to data from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA International), between February 2020 and February 2022, because of the international health emergency due to COVID-19, authorities in at least 80 countries and territories decided to postpone national and local elections. Despite this situation, citizens and electoral authorities found a way to proceed with democratic processes.

In the electoral sphere, this situation posed challenges in the administration and organization of elections and in the protection of political and electoral rights of citizens. The pandemic required health and social efforts that had implications for electoral justice, primarily utilizing information and communication technologies (ICT).

In 2022 and 2023, democratic regimes faced new challenges such as energy, food, and economic crises, along with an increase in inflation that raised the cost of living. Additionally, the continued use of ICT to spread false information contributed to the polarization of societies globally. These factors, among others, led to a rise in disillusionment with democracy.

To study the international scenario, during these periods, a group of experts held four virtual meetings to analyze the development and implementation of international solutions and best practices that were replicable and effectively contributed to protecting the political and electoral rights of citizens.

This document compiles the best practices in electoral matters implemented by various administrative and jurisdictional authorities, identified in these meetings. It particularly highlights those addressing three major challenges: 1) Compliance with health measures; 2) Fake news and new technologies; and 3) Gender-based violence and youth.

1. Compliance with health measures:

In the electoral context, the health crisis led authorities to implement innovative measures to conduct elections without jeopardizing the health of their personnel and citizens. Some successfully implemented mechanisms include:

- In Ecuador, the National Electoral Council (CNE), in coordination with the country's health authorities, designed a biosafety protocol implementing innovative services to reduce the risk of contagion among the population while safely conducting the general elections of 2021. Among the selected procedures, the planning of staggered voting hours stands out. This practice



was based on organizing voters according to the last digit —whether even or odd— of their ID, along with the deployment of control measures for voter concentrations in public spaces, the use of protective gear, and the proper separation of disposable items, among others. The results of this democratic event showed an 80% turnout, demonstrating that, despite the risks, the citizens trusted the care mechanisms established by electoral bodies and authorities to go to the polls and vote for their representatives.¹

- In the Netherlands, as a precautionary measure during the health crisis, general elections were carried out through a gradual organization mechanism that spread the voting population over a three-day period —Monday, March 15, Tuesday, March 16, and Wednesday, March 17. Additionally, to avoid contact, polling stations were set up in drive-thru mode. This proposal allowed people to vote practically and quickly from their cars, avoiding the dangers of gatherings in terms of contagion.²
- In the case of Latin America, electoral authorities were actively involved in the development and monitoring of health protocols at all stages of the electoral cycle, requiring intense coordination between national bodies and regional organizations, such as the Pan American Health Organization. This effort led to a profound exchange of ideas to improve democratic practices and set a historic precedent for the countries in the region.³
- Meanwhile, the Elections Qualifications Court of Chile also adopted some innovative measures. For example, an electronic system was designed to collect approximately 46 thousand records for each electoral process, distributed across all tables in the country. The implementation of these measures aimed to reduce the risks of infection. Virtual complaint platforms were also enabled to facilitate the free and easy access of voters to electoral justice without the need to leave their homes. As a result of good practices related to health policies in electoral processes, there was an increase in citizen participation in the second round of presidential elections. In the first presidential round in Chile, approximately 7 million voters cast their ballots, representing 47.3% of the electoral roll, while in the second round, 8 million 364 thousand citizens voted, indicating a growth in the participation rate to

¹ National Electoral Council of Ecuador

² International IDEA

³ IIDH/CAPEL



55.65%. This increase is partly attributed to government health policies that encouraged participatory mobility among the population.⁴

2. Fake news and new technologies:

The greatest challenges for the electoral justice system have their roots in the proliferation of misinformation and fake news, whose rapid dissemination through various media outlets and social networks implies a challenge to contemporary democracies. Similarly, the advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has posed challenges to electoral activities, placing participatory governments in a vulnerable position due to the lack of legal precedents in this field. In this regard, there is an increase in the consumption and dissemination of electoral content on platforms such as TikTok. This has compelled governments, authorities, and organizations to innovate in the development of strategies capable of addressing these challenges.

Here are some examples of good practices and initiatives implemented to address these issues, many of which were framed within the context of the COVID-19 health emergency:

- Among the procedures adopted by the electoral authorities of Peru during the pandemic, the following stood out for their effectiveness:
 1. The enablement of public and televised virtual hearings.
 2. The mandatory use of the electronic booth/digital signature by party representatives (representatives of political parties at polling stations).
 3. The establishment of a fact-checking committee to combat misinformation.
 4. Exceptionally, the public deliberation of justices.⁵
- The Electoral Commission of Georgia implemented the Information Protection Center, operational since 2021 with the support of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The center monitors television and social media, establishing permanent units to provide accurate electoral information to the public and, on the other hand, to expose and prevent misinformation and fake news.⁶
- The Superior Electoral Court (TSE) of Brazil implemented an anti-disinformation program through agreements with monitoring agencies and

⁴ Elections Qualifications Court of Chile (TCE)

⁵ National Jury of Elections of Peru

⁶ Central Electoral Commission of Georgia



major social media platforms, aiming to combat misinformation on a large scale.⁷

- International IDEA presented a series of virtual campaigns that, transitioning to a digital model, had a positive impact on dispute resolution. An example of this is legal hearings.⁸
- In the Americas, the consolidation of new social media platforms, such as TikTok, has systematically influenced the increased popularity of certain candidates and their trajectory as electoral contenders for various positions. Additionally, due to their accessible and appealing format — short videos allowing for more personal and direct interaction — these platforms appear to bridge physical distances between voters and candidates (e.g., the case of Guatemala with Carlos Pineda and Bernardo Arévalo). This sets a fundamental precedent for the future of American democracies. It's worth noting that monitoring social media and dissemination platforms helps identify new political players and technological influences that have redefined electoral processes worldwide.⁹
- In reference to the above, in Argentina, electoral authorities and platforms Meta, X (formerly Twitter), and YouTube established channels of dialogue and reached an agreement that reaffirmed the commitment of these companies to ensure the free, transparent, and peaceful development of electoral campaigns. This agreement was based on the "ethical mode of operation," aiming to monitor the spread of fake news and political advertisements. Despite disruptions in the last presidential election, this pact serves as a reference for addressing regional challenges and provides a viable alternative for safeguarding democracies.¹⁰

Gender-based violence and youth:

- Gender issues are among the most significant contemporary paradigms in the electoral arena. In the 2023 elections in Ecuador, there was an increase in gender-based political violence. Therefore, authorities developed projects to

⁷ Regional Electoral Tribunal of Sao Paulo

⁸ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)

⁹ Organization of American States (OAS)

¹⁰ National Electoral Chamber of Argentina



address violence and discrimination against populations whose political and electoral rights have historically been violated (such as indigenous women, LGBTQ+ individuals, etc.). In this regard, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Ecuador (TSE) promoted cooperation and assistance from non-governmental organizations, civil society, and universities to reaffirm their commitment to strengthening democracy and continuing the process of learning and transformation.¹¹

Additionally, in the latest 2023 elections, the TSE intervened to ensure that women had at least 50% representation in the general elections. Moreover, as a measure to address the disparity in the participation and integration of the young population, outreach efforts were made to thousands of new voters in this age group through social media.¹²

- Nepal, due to its geography and history, operates under a mixed proportional political system, distinguishing it from Western countries. The last electoral exercise in 2022 was marked by a social media campaign known as "not again," led by a new generation of young politicians who resisted being governed by the "old parties." This initiative led to the creation of an alternative with the Independent Nationalist Party, which positioned itself as the fourth force in the country, securing 165 seats.¹³
- Finally, the observation of international organizations, such as the Organization of American States (OAS), has revealed that, at least in the American region, a significant portion of digital violence originates from gender-related issues. It is noteworthy that 89% of historical observations and recommendations on gender-based political violence issued by the OAS, covering 28 countries in the region, have been made in the last five years. Furthermore, one-third of all recommendations made by the OAS address issues related to political violence against women. These figures can serve as a precedent for countries to formulate new policies for timely prevention and attention. The numbers also underscore the importance of implementing electoral observation missions with a gender component.¹⁴

¹¹ Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Guatemala

¹² Idem

¹³ Supreme Court of Nepal

¹⁴ Organization of American States (OAS)



ANNEX I. SPEAKERS

ELECTORAL ASSESSMENT OF THE FIRST SEMESTER 2021 – July 30, 2021

1. José Cabrera, counselor of the National Electoral Council of Ecuador
2. Yessica Clavijo, national director of Supervision and Electoral Processes of the National Jury of Elections of Peru
3. Ingrid Bicu, national expert from Romania in strategic communication and elections, International IDEA
4. José Thompson, executive director of IIDH/CAPEL

ELECTORAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SECOND SEMESTER 2021 – March 24, 2022

1. Giorgi Kalandarishvili, president of the Central Election Commission of Georgia
2. Carmen Gloria Valladares, Secretary Rapporteur of the Elections Qualifications Court of Chile
3. Alberto Fernández Gibaja, senior program officer of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)

ELECTORAL ASSESSMENT 2022 – December 8, 2022

1. Fernanda Diniz, advisor to the Cabinet of the Presidency of the Regional Electoral Tribunal-TRE, São Paulo
2. Elisa Volpi, assistant professor in Comparative Politics at Franklin University Switzerland
3. Anil Kumar Sinha, Justice of the Supreme Court of Nepal

ELECTORAL ASSESSMENT 2023 – December 1, 2023

1. Martin Okumu-Masiga, Secretary-General of the Africa Judges & Jurists Forum (AJJF)
2. Sebastián Schimmel, Secretary of Electoral Action of the National Electoral Chamber of Argentina
3. Fernando Muñoz Benítez, Chief Justice of the Electoral Dispute Tribunal of Ecuador
4. Blanca Odilia Alfaro Guerra, Chief Justice of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Guatemala
5. Gerardo de Icaza, Director of the Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation (OAS)