

Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS" report about the course of local authorities' elections

Ramallah: Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHAMS" issued a report about the course of the electoral process which was conducted on 20 !0 20!2" #he center in its report mentioned that since the center got the aspect of "local obser\$er"%the Central &lections Committee as well as its electoral departments in many go\$ernorates has communicated with the center through meetings so as to inform the center about the wor' (s progress and preparations for the electoral process") s well%representati\$es from the Central &lections Committee participated in many meetings with the networ' s which the center belongs to%and there was a permanent communication to ac*uaaint the center step by step regarding the course of preparations for the electoral process" #he center also mentioned that this communication and these continuous meetings besides discussions within the prepatory period for conducting elections ha\$e a great and positi\$e impact on building partnerships and special relationships with the Central &lections Committee"

#he center also congratulated the Central &lections Committee for their success in arranging and conducting the electoral process for the local authorities which too' place on 20 !0 20!2 which assured the committee(s e+perience and professionalism in this field"

Arranging the electoral process

#he center also mentioned that its obser\$ing staff in all \$ote(s departments in the , est - an' go\$ernorates noticed the arrangement%order and professionalism within the staffs of the Central &lections Committee" #he guiding signs%electors(path%lanes%wor' ers(locations either inside or outside \$ote(s centers and the place of the electoral record were ob\$ious%noticeable and easy to access %and each person was responsible for his her duties"

#he responsible and super\$isors of electoral departments and \$ote(s centers ha\$e dealt respectfully with the citi.ens as well as media%obser\$ing teams and agents of blocs in addition to candidates%and this represent the high

professionalism, capacity and equality to treat everybody without bias or discrimination") as well as both the arrangement and responsibility that Central Elections Committee with its staffs has shown confirms that we are advancing towards countries with electoral inheritance"

The comments of observing staffs

/H) M/ center in its report mentioned that comments which were gathered by observing staff affiliated with it assure that irregularities and comments which were documented don't form a reason for affecting the elections (or results) integrity, and that these irregularities documented by /H) M/ staff represent only some individuals behaviors which are not systematic and don't reflect an approach or policy"

Security forces' intervention

/ome individuals from security forces were existed inside voting centers even after they voted despite the fact that some observers and agents protested for the head of voting center, and they told him that it is important for these individuals to leave the center but some of them insisted to exist inside the center or next to the doors"

The validity of voting's center in terms of place

The observing staff in /H) M/ center noticed that some centers included the voting center in the second floor the thing which hindered the easy access of aged people or people with disabilities there, like /ilet) lthaher in Jenin"

The hindrance of Journalists' work

Despite the fact that some Journalists got a card from the Central Elections Committee to cover elections, but the observing staff noticed that centers (guards have forbidden Journalists from going through the centers to take photos" This led the staff to inform the police that their work is represented just in protecting the center instead of intervening in the electoral process" 2i'e - eitonya /econdary /chools for boys school in Ramallah and - iddo in Jerusalem"

The electoral record

It is known that registration is the condition for candidacy and voting but some people who came to vote didn't find their names in voters' record and then they raised concerned people" / some of them went to other centers in the main electoral department while others didn't find their names in any centers" Expectations refer that some people haven't already registered while others confirm that they have registered since they have voted in the same center according to them" / we can say it is probable that they voted previously by having their names in the civil register in the previous elections or they registered another time in another authority or they haven't already registered and this happened in the majority of governorates"

The electoral campaign

Despite the fact that Central Elections Committee has announced about the importance of stopping the electoral campaign before conducting elections in 24 hours but the center had some irregularities for some electoral blocs" / some of them didn't stop their campaigns not only next to centers' doors and the surrounding area but also on the level of the electoral department through cars which carries photos and flags in addition to other means of electoral campaigning besides distributing brochures and cards to elect a list and this occurred in several governorates"

Contradicted instructions

HRM/ observing staff noticed that some supervisors were giving wrong instructions and guidelines which contradict law as well as the procedures and guidelines of the Central Elections Committee" / some supervisors asked both the head and employees of the voting center to look for hidden mobiles in the pockets of voters which are not visible to other staff inspection and other supervisors asked journalists to leave the voting centers without any right" This took place in Ramallah secondary school for girls during the votes of security officers and in Martyr Youssef schools in Jericho in Jenin"

Illiterates' voting

Despite the fact that local authorities (law in article 40 which talks about illiterate or disabled voter and the possibility to make close relatives vote instead of them) and what has been mentioned in the second paragraph of the same article that the Central Elections Committee will take measures to guarantee handling this issue, but the center's observers noticed that some people voted instead of illiterate people for many times even they are not their relatives. Some people also whom others voted instead of them actually have university certificates and others are university students, and this irregularity took place in many governorates.

Candidates' intervention

SHAMS observers noticed direct interventions by many candidates in several lists within the work of the Central Elections Committee staffs by dialogues and discussions not only inside the center but also inside voting centers.

Recommendations

At the end of its report which a copy of it was delivered to the Central Elections Committee, SHAMS center recommended the following:

- 16 The importance to review some law articles and modifying them"
- 26 The center requested that the Central Elections Committee should take into consideration comments observed by the center and other local observing organizations through regulations and instructions and making some modifications related to the electoral process"
- 76 The center asked the committee to benefit from lessons and results of the electoral process in its phases precisely having one list incomplete in number if compared with number of local authorities"
- 46 The center requested to conduct elections in work hours not in days or seasons in which citizens are busy"
- 86 The center recommended security officers not to intervene in the course of the electoral process"