



# Observations on the elections and recommendations to the Comelec

From Namfrel/Ppcrv/Votecare coordinating council of **Abra**

1. Computerized election
2. Bring cases against oppressors of election officers
3. Do not assign neophytes to difficult areas where decision-making is too difficult for them

From Namfrel **Bataan** chapter

1. Comelec should be well prepared in their mandated duty.
2. Comelec election officer who acted and/or made noteworthy decisions promoting clean and honest elections - **Angelina Garrido**, election officer of Balanga city.

Report from Picpa **Bataan** president, Antonio Perez to Picpa national headquarters on 19 June.

The problems encountered during this election is typical of the same problems that we experienced in the past several years. Picpa will be most applauded if it can lobby hard for the computerization of the election process. This is what we need for our electoral process.

We thank our Picpa national officials for this great endeavor of contributing its expertise to this national undertaking. We thank them for giving us the opportunity to serve our nation, though we are not very happy to say that we succeeded well in the task.



From Namfrel **Benguet**

#### Observations on the conduct of the elections

1. Disenfranchisement of many voters
2. A mysterious power blackout in some voting centers during the counting of ballots
3. The list of number of precincts from the Comelec were not consistent with what Namfrel had
4. Precinct officials did not know the role of Namfrel; obviously they were poorly instructed about their job
5. Inconsistencies in the number of votes indicated in the ERs; the figures and the words did not match

At the end of the day, it is still the powerful, the wealthy, the popular, and the cheaters that won. It is still a dirty election. It seems that the masses have their own criteria of choosing candidates. They seem to be: popularity, family ties, [those who portray] the "martyr" image, "handshakers" and "wavers."

#### Recommendations to Comelec

1. Review and clean up the party list
2. Combined orientation of voting center officials [BEI] and Namfrel [municipal and] provincial officials before elections
3. Workout the computerization of election now
4. Update and clean up the voters' lists



## From Namfrel **Cagayan**

### Observations on the elections

Generally peaceful except that there was an attempt to snatch the ballot boxes in the municipality of **Sta. Ana**, which resulted to the death of a policeman and wounding of two Namfrel volunteers.

### Recommendations to Comelec

They should be fast in acting on complaints by the voters.

### Outstanding Comelec officials

**Atty. Hilario Sagun**

**Amanda Ibanes**

## From Namfrel **Kalinga**

### Observations on the conduct of the elections

1. Rampant vote buying
2. Few turnout
3. In some parts, election is generally peaceful but not honest due to the rampant distribution of rice, money and others
4. Many voters were not able to vote due to difficulty of locating their names as well as their names [were] not found in the list of voters
5. Few precincts in the province where Namfrel/Ppcrv watchers were not allowed in

The conduct of the May 14 elections is peaceful but could not be said as clean and honest because there are still many political manipulations



done by some political camps such as rampant vote buying and selling of votes. [The] Election process is still very tiring for volunteers. [But the] presence of Namfrel had lessened fraudulent activities by some parties. It also helped [the] BEIs in performing their roles.

#### Activities that helped promote conduct of clean and honest elections

Creation of HOPE (honest, orderly, and peaceful elections)-Kalinga, which is a partnership of the Security Forces, the Comelec, the designated government agencies and the Church and NGOs for the preparation of and conduct of the election. Common meetings and fora were conducted on the planning, monitoring and conduct of the election.

#### Outstanding election officer

**Atty. Thomas Uyam**, provincial Comelec supervisor, for his openness and support for the participation of civil society, public, and private sectors.

#### Recommendations to Comelec

1. Clean up list of voters
2. Upgrade qualifications of candidates
3. Disunity among Comelec commissioners is affecting our political structure in both local and national [levels]. It is the electorate that is adversely affected. We strongly recommend that they go beyond their personal interests and biases and work together for the needed genuine reform for the growth of our nation.
4. We strongly recommend computerization of the next elections



From Namfrel **Isabela**

#### Observations on the conduct of the election

We observed massive vote-buying, terrorism, and vote-padding (in [the town of] **Angadanan**). There were election returns in with duplicate serial numbers in the town of **San Guillermo**.

#### Recommendations to Comelec

1. Automation of the elections
2. Investigation of **Andres Pascua, Gil Abuan, and Felipe Ammugauan**, members of the board of canvassers, for their role in vote-padding in **Angadanan**.

From Namfrel **La Union**

#### Observations on the conduct of the elections

By and large peaceful, thanks to the concerted efforts of the PNP, Comelec and Namfrel. [There were] few incidents of killings in hot [spots] like **Balaoan** prior to the elections and rampant vote-buying and heavy spending by all candidates. Vote-buying would cast doubt on its [election's] credibility but that would be difficult to prove as both voters and candidates are guilty of it.

#### Outstanding Comelec officials

**Elvira Jasmin Manuel** – regional director  
**Atty. Andrew Barcena** – provincial election supervisor  
**Atty. Mariano Salas** – election officer of San Fernando city



They did their jobs well with no trace of being in favor [or against] candidates in spite of accusations by defeated candidates.

From Namfrel **Nueva Ecija**

#### Observations on the conduct of the elections

1. Generally BEIs and volunteers were cordial, cooperative and honest
2. New [members] of the BEI did not follow proper procedures and had minor differences with our volunteers
3. Many voters' names could not be located
4. Full support from religious, civic, NGOs, and other groups
5. There were some precincts without Ppcrv volunteers

#### Recommendations to Comelec

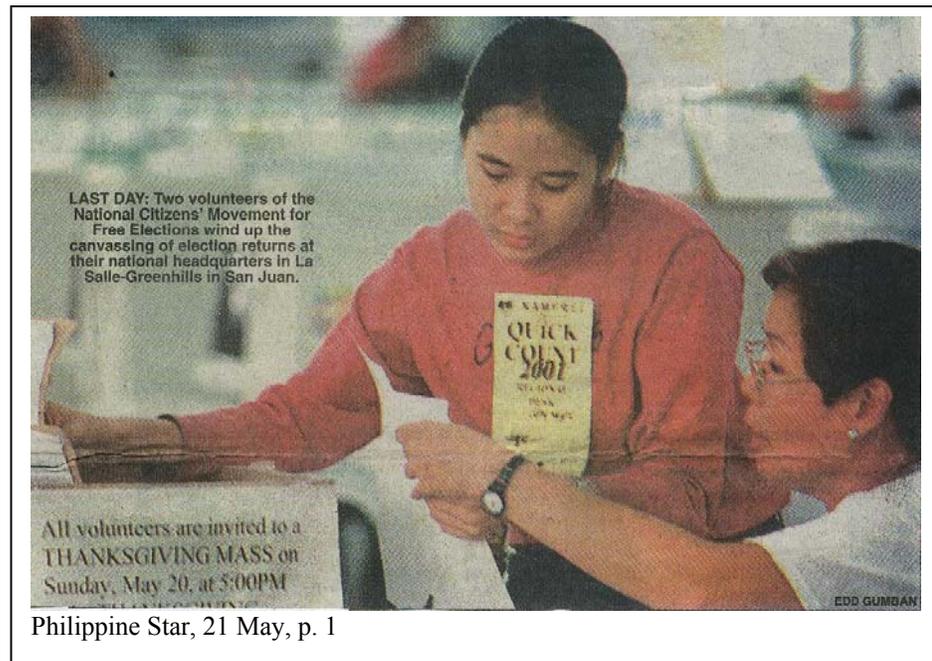
1. Common poster areas should be identified ahead of time and enforced strictly. There should be a corresponding formal information to the candidates so that there will be no excuses [for violations] later.
2. Thorough cleaning of the voters' list.
3. Election violators be jailed, not only accused.
4. Serious orientation of BEIs in manageable numbers for proper absorption and understanding [of instructions], stressing that the accredited citizens' arm of the Comelec be recognized and accepted as poll watchers in the precincts. Joint orientation is encouraged.
5. Serious implementation of the articles of the peace covenant by all candidates.
6. Early posting of the list of registered voters, as required by law.



7. More information dissemination on the party list elections.
8. Comelec takes the lead, [and] not behind all organizations.
9. Computerization [of elections]!

#### Outstanding Comelec officials

1. **Renato Ramiscal**, election officer of Gapan. Gapan is one of the areas of concern. In spite of the harassment and intimidation, he was able to facilitate the conduct of elections. He coordinated with Comelec, with the Ppcrv-(Mahal)-Namfrel-PNP command, and with other agencies.
2. **Purificacion Batisan**, election officer of Aliaga. The election was peaceful, credible and well coordinated with concerned groups.
3. **John Rivera**, election officer of Munoz. Munoz is a very controversial area yet elections were conducted peacefully and in an orderly manner.





From Namfrel **Nueva Vizcaya**

Observations on the conduct of the elections

The election of 2001 is characterized with the most rampant vote-buying especially in the remote upland *barangays*. [It is] worth noting that this was done by candidates who have been in the position for some time.

Recommendations to the Comelec

1. For the national level, "clean [up] the house" and put their acts together.
2. Reinforce briefing and orientation of BEIs and be strict on the accomplishment of ERs and other forms
3. Reprimand BEIs who could not follow instructions.

From Namfrel **Pampanga**

Observations of the conduct of the elections

1. Many voters voted early
2. Many could not find their names on the list of voters
3. Voters information sheets of the Comelec were not distributed; only a handful of municipalities [distributed] these in coordination with our volunteers in Sto. Tomas and Apalit
4. If people are to be believed, vote buying still flourished in many areas



#### Activities that helped promote conduct of clean and honest elections

Activation of the Convenors Group of Pampanga, led by the archbishop, local businessmen, press people, and NGOs who worked on the campaign for honest, orderly, and peaceful elections (HOPE). This was done in partnership with line government agencies specifically the DILG and PNP, DECS, and Comelec for the signing of a Covenant for Peace by local candidate. The covenant was posted in public places.

#### Recommendations to Comelec

Automate the next election please.

If the BEIs were properly oriented, ERs would have been turned over much faster. The Namfrel quick count provided immediate local information about the results.

#### From Namfrel **Pangasinan** (Alaminos chapter)

##### Observations on the elections

The election is chaotic with confusing arrangement of voting precincts. Many voters had to go from one precinct to another to look for their names. The party list made the whole exercise of elections very difficult. The usual election violations are still very much around.

##### Recommendations to Comelec

Comelec should have screened out the party list [organizations] that are not qualified before elections and not after.



Some BEIs are still ignorant about the role of Namfrel volunteers. There are still some who refused to give the 6<sup>th</sup> copy of the ER. We can only complain but apparently the ignorance continues.

#### From Namfrel **Albay**

##### Recommendations to Comelec

1. Amend the [election] code: Address loopholes of party list; strengthen provisions on role of citizens' arm
2. Work for the computerization of elections
3. Cleanse the commission of corrupt officials at all levels
4. Work for increase in budget

#### From Namfrel **Batangas**

##### Observations on the conduct of the elections

Generally, the election was peaceful in terms of election-related cases. Politics of patronage is still very strong in the province, considering that many politicians were engaged in the traditional style of gimmicks to win the hearts of the people. They used influence, showbiz personalities, and money. We had this perception that Comelec was not ready and not even sure to have elections last May, perhaps because of EDSA 2. This resulted to the non-delivery of election paraphernalia to the assigned centers or municipalities. We have been hearing these litany of complaints from the election officers themselves. Firstly, the Comelec precinct mapping project [where] people were expecting to see their names of could guide [them to their] precincts. Secondly, the voters' list were not available earlier for people to check, which resulted to confusion at the last minute.



Thirdly, the late assignment or announcement of precincts and voting centers.

#### Recommendations to Comelec

1. Prepare early
2. Implement laws like modernization law, project of precincts, billboards [common poster areas], etc.
3. Prosecute election violators
4. Moratorium of [re]assignments
5. Workshop/orientation

#### From Namfrel **Marinduque**

#### Observations on the elections

1. Vote buying is still rampant.
2. Many candidates are hardly known by the voters.
3. Many registered voters cannot find their names and were not able to vote.
4. Candidates did not follow the limit of the [campaign] expenses.
5. Most BEIs are young and new and they lack training.
6. Late accreditation of Namfrel had a very bad effect. Some watchers were not able to do their duty because they were not given Comelec IDs and IDs from Namfrel were not recognized.

#### Recommendations to Comelec

1. No more intramurals [among the commissioners].
2. Do your mandate.
3. Keep your independence.



4. Strict screening of party list candidates.
5. Computerization of the electoral process.
6. Clean up voters list.
7. Strict monitoring of candidates' [campaign spending] limits and candidates must declare their supporters so that after the elections people can make observations whether their supporters and being favored or are enjoying special privileges.

#### From Namfrel **Catanduanes**

Activities that the chapter conducted that helped promote conduct of clean and honest elections

1. candidates' forum and signing of peace covenant;
2. homilies and issuance of pastoral letter of the bishop; and
3. voter's education.

Recommendations to the Comelec

1. Computerization of the election.
2. Orient the BEI about the conduct of the elections, especially in having a citizens' arm like Namfrel.
3. BEIs should be honest.
4. Immediate release of honoraria to BEIs.
5. Copies to be furnished to Namfrel should be clear and without discrepancies.

#### From Namfrel **Laguna**

Observation on the conduct of the elections

Relatively peaceful except in Binan and Cabuyao



## Recommendation to Comelec

Tap experienced Namfrel volunteers to help give seminars to the BEIs before elections.

From Namfrel **Gumaca, Quezon**

### Observations on the elections

1. Many voters were disenfranchised.
2. Flying voters in **Pitogo** and **Calauag** (caught and jailed).
3. Rampant vote buying.

From Namfrel **Occidental Mindoro** (reported by Namfrel Sablayan municipal coordinator Fr. Gil Alexandria, SVD, parish priest of San Sebastian, Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro)

### Observations on the elections

I would like to mention that the elections here were peaceful and orderly. There were reported cases of disenfranchisement, vote-buying, and harassment – the usual stuff.

From Namfrel **Mandaluyong city, Metro Manila**

There was a low turnout of voters. We received a lot of reports that many voters were unable to find their names in the voters' lists. There were also some cases wherein voters found their names at the assistance desk of the Ppocrv but still they could not vote because their names did not appear in the voters' list that were displayed outside [the] classrooms.

We were not able to get any precinct maps.



The reason why Comelec was not able to give [us] a copy of the voters list was that they didn't have a printer. We did not get the updated computerized voters list until four days before the election.

Comelec did not send out most of the Voter Information Sheets until 10 days before the elections. Namfrel and Ppcrv had to help them in sending these out.

Election officer, Atty. Mary Anne Lacuesta, was courteous and accommodating, but she was "new" and seemingly overwhelmed although she is a veteran. She had just come in September last year. So it seemed that she was not following up on what was needed for the elections. They did not meet a single deadline.

Recommendation to Comelec

Start [preparations] early.

From Namfrel **Marikina, Metro Manila** (reported by Namfrel Marikina chairperson, Pastor Navarro on 8 August)

Recommendations to Comelec

1. Improve dissemination on party list representation.
2. In-depth training of the BEI on the posting of votes on the election return and on knowledge or awareness of the authority of Namfrel volunteers to avoid confusion.
3. Early accreditation of Namfrel is strongly suggested.



From Namfrel **Parañaque, Metro Manila** (reported by Namfrel Parañaque alternate- co-chairperson, Sr. Remedios Centeno, DC on 13 June)

#### Observations on the elections

Elections were started on time. While tabulating the ERs we noticed that in several precincts less than 50% of the registered voters voted.

#### Recommendations to Comelec

All elections should always be prepared in advance. Since the success of democracy depends upon clean, honest and peaceful elections, the efforts of the Comelec should be centered on this. It almost every election, we see the Comelec very poorly prepared for such a very important undertaking. There are always complaints regarding the unpreparedness of Comelec not only with respect to this election but also in the past elections as well.

After letting the local Namfrel photocopy the project of precincts (at our own expense) the local Comelec re-clustered the precincts (which necessitated new work and new expense). The result was that some precincts had 250 registered voters [maximum of 200 by law] while others had as few as 10, 15 and even zero [voters]! This we believe led to disenfranchisement of voters.

The local Comelec office is either always closed or if open, only the staff is there. The registrar [election officer] was not available especially after the elections when the losing candidates started filing protests.



Every effort should be exerted to automate the 2004 national elections with the least possible ways of cheating and/or other anomalous activities.

From Namfrel **San Juan, Metro Manila**

#### Observations on the elections

1. Only 10 SOVPs, out of 25, were given [to Namfrel]. Reason: missing at the Comelec office.
2. In Pasadena polling place, pencil was used on the tally board and ER sheets were signed by the poll watchers while the counting was still on-going. Precinct volunteers called the attention of the BEI chair.
3. At the start like in San Juan Municipal High School, the BEI chairs hesitated to give the 6<sup>th</sup> copy of the ERs.
4. Nine BEIs did not submit the 6<sup>th</sup> copy of the ERs. Eleven days later, Comelec released them. Reason: teachers brought the ERs with them.

#### Recommendations to Comelec

1. It is imperative that the 2004 elections be automated.
2. Honor and recognize Namfrel as citizens' arm to insure honest and clean elections through its OQC.
3. Comelec should be free, independent and non-partisan.
4. Comelec officials and employees should be above politics and apolitical.
5. Comelec should be well prepared much ahead of the coming elections.



Report from Namfrel **Antique** Chairperson, Sally Tejares

Outstanding Comelec officials

I have the honor to recommend the following municipal election officers for recognition due to their outstanding performance during the 2001 elections:

1. **Elsa Salvacion Javier** - She is the election officer of Caluya but served in Pandan because her husband was a candidate for vice mayor in Caluya. She is very supportive to Namfrel and Ppcrv that during the briefings with the BEIs she invited Namfrel volunteers to be present.
2. **Carmencita Moscoso** – She is the election officer of Bugasong. She always consults Namfrel volunteers before making a decision. She advised our volunteers where to concentrate and to assign more volunteers in places where she considers “hot spots.”
3. **Abelardo Villavert, Jr.** – He is the election officer of San Jose. He is very supportive to Namfrel ever since. (In the 1980s he accepted an assignment in the municipality of San Remigio, a mountainous municipality and known to be NPA country, because nobody dared to accept that assignment.) He accompanied me, issued me a Comelec ID card, signed our volunteers’ IDs and welcomed me to witness the counting at the municipal hall.

If our election officers have qualities of these three persons, I can say that we will never face any trouble during elections.



From Namfrel **Capiz**

#### Observations on the elections

The political situation from the start of the election period to the voting and counting was generally peaceful. There were reports of massive vote buying that resulted to a heavy turnout of voters from 0900H to 1300H. Many voters could not find their names in the computerized voters' list and in the book of voters. The BEIs responded poorly to the problems, offenses and violations within the polling places. Absence or lack of transportation for BEIs and election paraphernalia from the municipal halls were not given attention at all by Comelec and the local government units. Many electorates expressed their lack of understanding of the party list system. The work of local Comelec was greatly affected by the bickering of national officials of the Comelec.

#### Recommendations to Comelec

We strongly push for the computerization of the voting and counting of the 2004 elections. This will restore the hope and confidence of our people for a clean, honest, and orderly election. Let us give Comelec a chance to rectify their honest mistakes. Changing the people at the commission will not solve the problem but changing the system will certainly improve the management [of the elections].

From Namfrel **Guimaras** (report by Namfrel Guimaras chairperson, Ana Eva Villanueva)

#### Observations on the elections

1. Elections were orderly done in the different municipalities.



2. The chairperson of Namfrel Buenavista was harassed and had a death threat from the Lakas NuCd party. He was ordered to vacate the lot where his house is being built because he volunteered for Namfrel, thinking that if you are Namfrel you are an opposing party.
3. Government employees who volunteered with Namfrel [through the Spirit of 100 Hours program of the Civil Service Commission] withdrew at the last minute because they thought that they could monetize the hours volunteered for the program.
4. Most of the previous volunteers were recruited to become party watchers causing Namfrel a hard time again to look for and train new volunteers.

Municipality of **Buenavista** – The many BEIs chosen by the district supervisor are related to Lakas-NuCd candidates and two members of the board of canvassers are also related to the mayoralty candidate of the Lakas-NuCd party. Some members of the BEI are tricycle drivers and high school graduates. On the third day of canvassing the election officer was hospitalized due to pressure from both parties causing the canvass to be temporarily suspended. The Regional Comelec office [based in Iloilo] assigned a temporary election officer from Iloilo to continue the canvass. The acting election officer requested to be relieved because the environment was not conducive and because of death threats. On May 22, Regional Comelec sent Atty. Ibarra to act as election officer [and compose the board of canvassers with] DECS principal, and clerk of court of Buenavista. On May 25, Atty. Edgar Espinosa was proclaimed representative of the lone district of Guimaras to Congress. On May 28, the canvass for the gubernatorial down to the *Sangguniang Bayan* was suspended due to a protest from the LDP party. No local winners have been proclaimed.



Municipality of **Nueva Valencia** – *Barangay kagawad* Clarita Toledano and Ma. Luz Gambalan of *barangay* Lucmayan were caught vote buying. A sample ballot [containing] P150 was confiscated and [was submitted as] exhibit with the PNP.

#### Recommendations to Comelec

Provide copy of the list of registered voters to Namfrel in every precinct, free of charge. Instruct the BEIs to fill up the number of registered voters and voters who actually voted in the ERs.

Submitted by Namfrel municipal chairperson of the municipality of **Buenavista**, police chief inspector Wilfredo Campo – Comelec should provide transportation to deliver and pick up ballot boxes from the Comelec office to the different precincts in the *barangays* and vice versa.

#### From Namfrel **Bohol**

##### Observations on the conduct of the elections

Some members of the BEI do not have the proper orientation that makes the election proceedings not systematic.

##### Recommendation to Comelec

There should be two shifts for the BEIs – one for the election process and one for the counting.



From Namfrel **Negros Oriental**

#### Recommendations to Comelec

1. Early release of final project of precincts.
2. Final copy of the names of local candidates must be released early and not one week before the elections.
3. Clearer 6<sup>th</sup> copy of the ER
4. BEIs should diligently fill up in the ERs all information needed and in a clear and legible manner.
5. Comelec must consider Namfrel a partner in this venture and release information to them without having to wait for a Namfrel volunteer to approach them.

From Namfrel **Southern Leyte**

#### Observations on the elections

The last elections made a mockery of the right to vote. It was a showcase of who has financial capability. It became a contest of one candidate outwitting another candidate and the voters. The candidates who won were [obviously] smarter. Having witnessed the provincial elections, I could say it was a disgrace!

There was massive vote buying on the eve of the elections. Most precincts ended precinct counting at [between] 3:00 and 4:00 a.m. [after Election Day] due to the huge number of voters, tiresome and tedious processes, and most of all fatigue. Most BEIs readily gave the 6<sup>th</sup> copies of the ER to Namfrel volunteers at the precincts. Others handed these copies at the municipal hall at the persistence of the volunteers. The canvassing of the gubernatorial position and declaration of the winner was delayed



due to objections from candidates who lost. This was resolved by Comelec central a month later.

#### Other activities by the chapter

Checking with election officers the appointments of questionable BEIs, attendance during the BEI briefing and escorting of BEIs from precincts to the canvassing centers.

From Namfrel **Basilan** (reported by Namfrel Basilan co-coordinators Fr. Rene Carbayas and Michael Manapol and attested to by Ppcrv-Namfrel Basilan chairperson Sr. Virginia Roy, OP, on 20 June)

#### Observations on the elections – Election Day

0900H – Names of people who voted in the last election were used by other people without any knowledge of the real persons bearing the true identity in barangay **Taberlongan, Maluso** [municipality].

0925H – Armed groups attacked the Upper Bulingan Elementary School between 0530H and 0800H. The attack subsided but continued at around 0900H. A civilian volunteer was reported to have died during the attack. The election has been cancelled and the paraphernalia were transferred to Lamitan municipality.

1000H – Flying voters reported in *barangay* **Tabuk**. In **Busay**, 16 voters who were supposed to cast their votes did not find their names in the voters' list. In **Begang**, names of voters appeared in the voters' list of **precinct 25A-4** but they reported that they have not registered [there] and even they were shocked and confused.



1100H – *Barangay* officials begun entering the precincts and supervising the voting in **Bantugan Elementary School, Upper Garlayan, Maluso** [municipality].

1300H – Flying voters discovered in **Maluso Elementary School**

1415H – In **Isabela** [city] **proper, East**, voter Esperanza Adalia Enriquez found out that someone used her name and voted. Maligue ballots will be counted at Kabunbata because there is no electricity. Voting in Upper Lanote might be transferred because there is no electricity. People in Binuangan and Calvario needed candles for the counting of ballots.

1650H – In **Kabunbata**, a public school teacher BEI was hiding and not showing the ballot while it is being read.

In general, Comelec preparations were a flop, a failure that has affected us. Polling places and precincts opened with an atmosphere of calm.

Counting and canvassing

1. Counting in some precincts of Isabela and all precincts in Sumisip was tightly guarded with the main gate of the school [lined with] barbed wires.
2. Most of the rooms were crowded with [BEIs assigned to] four or more precinct packed in one room. Most BEIs used the tally sheets as seating mats and used manila papers for canvassing instead.
3. Most election returns were not tallied simultaneously with the tally sheets. Instead, the votes were recorded first in



the tally sheets. When finished, the BEIs would then accomplish the ERs.

4. A number of BEIs do not know how to fill up the ERs.
5. The 6<sup>th</sup> copies of the ER were unreadable.
6. The serial number of the ERs for national positions were different from the ER for local positions in the municipality of **Maluso**.
7. Some BEIs did not release the 6<sup>th</sup> copy to the Ppcrv-Namfrel volunteers. They preferred that the volunteers claim it from the municipal Comelec.
8. Counting in some precincts took from two to four days because: there were no rooms available; poor lighting or no electricity; BEIs requested for a break; protests and objections [during counting] by candidates

We had problems coordinating with the [provincial] Comelec officer of Basilan. He seemed not interested to communicate with us. He failed to provide us a computer printout of the official voters' list [even if we offered instead to provide disks]. He allegedly held closed-door meetings with some candidates and prominent and influential individuals who are friends of candidates.

#### Recommendations to Comelec

1. Computerize elections at all levels.
2. Make clear guidelines to accredit party list groups [so] that they really represent marginalized sectors of society. There are too many of them.
3. Secure the municipal and provincial canvassing.



From Namfrel **Bukidnon**

BEIs have different interpretation about the instructions on the Namfrel IDs. They should be given sufficient and clear instruction about the role of Namfrel.

Namfrel municipal and provincial chairpersons should attend BEI orientation so that questions on Namfrel could be discussed.

Comelec should be serious about the implementation of the partnership between Namfrel and Comelec.

Overcome the pattern of delayed distribution of election information and materials.

From Namfrel **Compostela Valley** (reported by Namfrel Compostela chairperson, Teolulo Pasawa on 14 August)

All 10 election officers did their best to promote clean and honest elections. They did well and supported Namfrel volunteers assisting in [Comelec] areas of responsibility.

From Namfrel **Davao Oriental**

Recommendations to Comelec

The Comelec has done its best in their support for Namfrel. Their accommodation and effort to provide us with data were indeed a big help and hope that they will continue to do so. On the other hand we could say that Comelec also in some aspects lacks preparation. Some members were not so sure of their work. This has to be improved.



From Namfrel **Lanao del Norte**

#### Observations on the elections

Although there were alleged vote-buying and voters were not able to vote, generally the elections was peaceful. The manual canvassing of votes was terrible, just like in the past [elections]. It was inhuman especially for the members of the BEI.

#### Recommendations to Comelec

1. General registration of voters for the 2004 elections.
2. Computerization of the voters' list and voters should be given enough time to check/verify if their names are in the list. Namfrel should see to it that this is done by the Comelec.
3. Canvassing of votes must be computerized all over the country.
4. For places where trouble is most likely to occur, elections should be held one day ahead so Comelec could concentrate its manpower and resources in these areas.

From Namfrel **Lanao del Sur**

#### Observations on the conduct of the elections

All streets, buildings, homes, etc., in the province and Marawi city became poster areas of candidates.

[Delayed] release of election paraphernalia cause delays in the voting. But there was strict implementation of the closing of the voting at 1500H. There were failure of elections declared in some municipalities because of these delays.



Counting of votes were not done in the respective municipalities but venue [was] in four separate areas: Lanao provincial capitol for the 1<sup>st</sup> district, except Wao and Bumbaran, where counting was made in Wao; Lancamp, Marawi City, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> district, except for Malabang, Balabagan, Kapatagan, Sultan Gumander, Tubaran, and Marogong, where counting was done in Malabang.

The municipal treasurers of **Bumbaran** and **Poona-Bayabao** were killed.

There was tight security by the military of the counting booths so that Namfrel watchers were denied from entering and monitoring the count. This resulted to the failure of collecting the ERs. Namfrel had to resort to using the precinct tally forms to base its OQC on.

Counting was stop-and-go depending on the agreement by the opposing parties. Counting rate was three to five precincts per day.

Conclusion: The May 14, 2001 election is the worst election ever experienced.

“The May 14 election is the most expensive in terms of financial, fatigue, transportation, and casualties.”

#### Recommendations to Comelec

On the registration of voters: 1) Muslims should be made to swear on the Holy Qur’an that he/she has not registered in any [other] precinct before he/she is allowed to register. 2) Strict compliance of [registering only those who are] 18 years old [or



older]. 3) Identification cards of voters should be issued with photos.

On casting of votes: 1) Voting should start promptly at 0700H; no-ID-no-vote policy.

Computerize the counting and canvassing of votes.

Pay teachers their per diem according to the number of days served until the counting of votes is finished.

Strict implementation of the Omnibus Election Code and other [election] laws. Penalize erring election officers.

It is sad to note that until now [two months after the elections] no elected officials have been proclaimed.

From Namfrel **Surigao del Norte**

Observations on the elections

1. Vote buying were observed.
2. Surigao city, Malimono, Alegria, Tubod and San Jose were under Comelec control.

Outstanding Comelec officials

1. **Joy Jonathan Senaca** – election officer, Surigao city
2. **Norma Glico** – election officer, San Jose



### Recommendations to Comelec

1. Modernization/computerization of the system for the coming 2004 elections.
2. To have honest and competent Comelec personnel

### From Namfrel **Zamboanga city**

#### Observations on the elections

Some teachers were really complaining about the bad system in releasing election paraphernalia. They spent hours waiting and [with the thought that] they have to go home to far-flung areas. From this feedback, we got the impression that the distribution and pick-up system agreed during the final conference with the Comelec was not fully implemented.

#### Recommendations to Comelec

1. Clean up the CVL.
2. Improve information dissemination to avoid massive disenfranchisement of voters especially on registration of new voters and posting of the voters' list. Mobilize citizens and concerned groups to help out.
3. Improve the canvassing system. Use a computer to minimize human errors, and the stress that everyone experiences during this time.

#### Outstanding Comelec officials

1. **Atty. Helen Aguila-Flores** – regional director
2. **Atty. Roy Cuevas**
3. **Hamja Omar**



From Namfrel **South Cotabato** (reported by Namfrel national co-chairperson and chairperson of Concerned Citizens for Honest, Orderly and Peaceful Elections (CC-HOPE)-Namfrel South Cotabato Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez on 30 July)

#### Observations on the elections

1. 459,439 or 76.1% of the total registered voters in South Cotabato, Sarangani and General Santos cast their votes. Results from 3,577 out of 3,608 precincts were retrieved and tabulated.
2. The elections were generally peaceful.
3. Thousands were unable to vote because they could not locate their polling places.
4. Many trained CCHOPE-Namfrel volunteers were hired by political parties.
5. CCHOPE-Namfrel volunteers were remarkable in their commitment.
6. Massive political education was conducted in most basic ecclesial communities (BECs) (around 1,000 in the diocese of Marbel). Money, however, was a significant factor

Recommendation to Comelec - Full automation of elections.

Commend the local Comelec, PNP and AFP for maintaining peace and order and for their full cooperation with CCHOPE-Namfrel.

From Namfrel **Sulu**

#### Observations on the elections

The assistance of the military resulted in peaceful elections.



Namfrel watchers accompanied the military, teachers and the election officers in delivering the ballot boxes from the [military] brigade to the different municipalities.

There was delay in the arrival of ballot boxes from the island municipalities and the delayed counting and canvassing affected our volunteers.

#### Outstanding Comelec officials

1. **Atty. Helen Aguila-Flores** – regional director, for issuing a strongly worded memorandum to the election officers in Sulu to attend to and immediately give Namfrel the ERs, COCs, and SOVs as soon as they are prepared.
2. **Haji Habibon Hassan** – for strongly opposing the order of the military. He said the military is deputized to assist [Comelec] so they must obey and cooperate with the Comelec.

Recommendation to Comelec – The counting must be centralized and computerized in one area in Jolo.