

# GLOBAL ELECTION MONITOR CODEBOOK

Version 1, 2025



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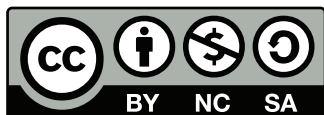
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# INTRODUCTION

The [Global Election Monitor](#) (GEM) aims to provide a continuous qualitative overview of democratic national elections and relevant electoral integrity challenges. Election stakeholders increasingly navigate changing information environments and eroding levels of trust in government institutions, as well as traditional challenges and hurdles related to electoral management.

All GEM briefs are based on reliable open-source information and typically highlight key concerns and developments drawn from news articles, reports by electoral management bodies (EMBs) and election observation reports. The information compiled in GEM is collected through desk research by International IDEA's Electoral Processes team, using a variety of keyword searches and fully referenced media monitoring. The GEM briefs are designed to provide a condensed overview of a given election and serve as a point of departure for further research; they are updated on a continuous basis to reflect new insights.

GEM contains 54 election briefs from the 2024 election super-cycle year covering 50 countries.<sup>1</sup> The briefs can be accessed by clicking on a country on the map or via the drop-down menu. Users can select the relevant challenge icon for election-related instances of alleged fraud, election management malfunction, election-related violence or reported cyber-attacks, gender-based violence, natural and human-made hazards, or mis- and disinformation narratives. The challenges were initially selected based on the eight challenges described in the Protecting Elections project (International IDEA 2023). In general, all GEM briefs follow the same structure. Each election brief also

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<sup>1</sup> Croatia, Iceland, Senegal and Sri Lanka each held two elections in 2024, hence the four additional briefs.

provides users with easy access to the corresponding country profile on International IDEA's Democracy Tracker which provides a broad democracy and human rights perspective (International IDEA n.d.). The GEM does not measure the severity, extent or volume of instances or allegations; rather, it simply tags potential challenges as they arise.

Briefs for 2024 do not include countries in which the minimum criteria for democratic competition are not met, either described as 'Not Free' according to the Freedom House ranking or with low scores based on the Global State of Democracy 'credible election' indicator. This is to avoid skewing the overview in countries where datapoints surrounding election may be falsified, unavailable or otherwise not representative. Therefore, the 2024 elections in Algeria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Chad, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Russia, Rwanda, Syria, Uzbekistan and Venezuela have not been covered by GEM.

GEM briefs for 2024 were published on 31 March 2025.



# CRITERIA USED FOR TAGGING INDICATORS

This codebook shares the criteria used in GEM for tagging seven indicators of electoral integrity challenges:

- instances of election management malfunction;
- instances of election-related violence;
- instances of gender-based violence;
- natural and human-made hazards;
- instances of mis- and disinformation narratives;
- reported cyber-attacks; and
- allegations of fraud.

These tags have been developed over the course of developing the format for briefs. They are intended to provide a quick overview and starting point for thematic research, rather than to categorize the scope of an integrity challenge in a given election. For instance, corruption within an electoral process can be a systemic issue or an isolated incident, just as the degree of violence within the scope of an election can vary. The purpose of GEM is to highlight instances or indications of challenges to the electoral process and direct the user to further resources, rather than describe the severity of an issue.

Electoral integrity is defined as an election's being 'based on the democratic principles of universal suffrage and political equality as reflected in international standards and agreements' and

‘professional, impartial, and transparent in its preparation and administration throughout the electoral cycle’ (International IDEA and Kofi Annan Foundation 2012). Elections fully empower citizens when the principles of contestation, participation, deliberation and adjudication are upheld (James, Garnett and Asplund 2025; James and Garnett 2025). An electoral integrity challenge is something that can put electoral integrity to the test (International IDEA forthcoming 2025).

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## **INSTANCES OF ELECTION MANAGEMENT MALFUNCTION**

Electoral management is the delivery of elections. The implementation of electoral rules is where voters most directly experience the effectiveness (or otherwise) of electoral processes. As the institutions responsible for organizing, monitoring and certifying electoral processes, it primarily falls to EMBs to minimize errors and ensure that any problems that arise do not materially impact results. Although many EMBs worldwide have become more proficient in core aspects of election delivery, in 2024 malfunctions continued to undermine voter confidence in some electoral processes and outcomes.

Various types of malfunction can impact voter perception. Technical mistakes arising from faulty set-up or poor maintenance of technology, such as electronic voter identification devices, can interrupt polling. Misplacing sensitive election materials such as completed votes, if only through procedural error, can affect the election result. Human error in how election officials interact with voters can spread over social media. Similarly, imprecision in transmission may distort early election results (Asplund 2023) and the wider information environment.

Electoral management malfunctions can arise from health and safety failures. EMBs are responsible for maintaining the well-being, security and safety of all staff—whether permanent or temporary—when they are on duty. When poll workers become ill or die due to long hours or challenging work conditions, the EMB is failing to maintain its duty of care. Negligence or neglect of duty of care may lead to official complaints, strikes, lawsuits and difficulty recruiting staff for future election events.

For a brief to be tagged with ‘instances of election management malfunction’, it will include reported instances of at least one of the following mistakes, errors or failures that perceptibly impact the delivery of elections:

1. *Technical mistakes.*
2. *Procedural mistakes.*
3. *Human error.*
4. *Negligence or failure to uphold the duty of care.*

### Important considerations

External factors such as cyber-attacks or emergency-related disruptions that impact a particular phase of the electoral cycle can trigger technical or procedural malfunction, contribute to human error, or lead to health risks. If this is the case, only the malfunction’s origin is tagged.<sup>2</sup>

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## INSTANCES OF ELECTION-RELATED VIOLENCE

Different actors can perpetrate violence in elections towards a variety of ends. Electoral violence includes coercive actions aiming to influence the process or outcome of an election. Election-related violence—which may be physical and/or psychological—is a serious humanitarian concern but also undermines electoral integrity.

For a brief to be tagged with ‘instances of election-related violence’, it will include publicly reported instances (as covered by media reports, election observation missions, or other verified sources) of:

1. *Physical violence.* Any form of bodily or physical harm targeting election actors, events, facilities or materials.

### Important considerations

GEM covers gender-based violence separately under the ‘gender-based violence in elections’ (GBV-E) tag. Instances of psychological violence (intimidation, harassment) directed against women are also reported under the (GBV-E) tag.

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<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding that hazard response is increasingly part of EMBs’ core technical and procedural competencies. It thus becomes a sphere for mistakes, both real and perceived (and further complicated by the dynamics of interagency working in emergencies).

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN ELECTIONS (GBV-E)

Gender-based violence (GBV) in the electoral context refers to harmful acts directed at individuals based on their gender, which aim to exclude, suppress or silence their participation in electoral processes. These acts can be perpetrated by state or non-state actors and occur both online and offline (see: Ballington 2017).

For a brief to be tagged with ‘gender-based violence in elections’, it will include publicly reported instances (as covered by media reports, election observation missions, or other verified sources) of at least one of the following:

1. *Physical violence*. Any form of physical harm or threat targeting women candidates, voters, election officials or political actors due to their gender, including assault, harassment or intimidation.
2. *Sexual violence and harassment*. Sexual harassment, coercion, threats or assault against women in politics, as candidates, voters, election officials or activists.
3. *Psychological violence*. Verbal abuse, harassment, threats or coercion targeting women due to their political engagement.
4. *Online gender-based violence*. Online harassment, cyberstalking, doxxing,<sup>3</sup> threats or gendered disinformation aimed at intimidating or discrediting women in electoral processes.
5. *Sexist speech and derogatory remarks*. Sexist or misogynistic rhetoric, hate speech or gendered disinformation in media, political campaigns or public discourse that targets women candidates, voters, election officials or activists.

### Important considerations

This category does not cover broader issues of gendered exclusion and discrimination, such as structural barriers to participation or underrepresentation.

In many countries in which gender-based discrimination is deeply ingrained in the culture, incidents of GBV-E are often not reported. As a result, the actual incidence may be much higher in these contexts. It is important to emphasize that open sources (and especially media sources) underpinning GEM may be biased towards highlighting key individual cases of GBV-E rather than the societal scale of the problem.

3 Publishing personally identifiable, compromising information about the victim in an unauthorized fashion, often across multiple online platforms.

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## NATURAL AND HUMAN-MADE HAZARDS

Human-made and natural hazards can damage or destroy critical infrastructure, impacting various aspects of the administration of elections throughout the electoral cycle (Asplund et al. 2024; James, Clark and Asplund 2023). According to the World Health Organization, hazards can take many forms, including natural, biological, technological and societal (Saulnier et al. 2021). Depending on a country's readiness and response, hazards can translate into disasters.

For a brief to be tagged with 'natural and human-made hazards', it will include publicly reported instances (as covered by media reports, election observation missions, or other verified sources) of at least one of the following:

1. *Disturbance of election activities* (voter registration, campaigns, voting operations, result announcement) due to a disaster.
2. *Disenfranchisement among displaced persons*.

### Important considerations

Note that the [Electoral Emergency and Crisis Monitor](#) has a higher count of elections affected by natural hazards compared to GEM in 2024 as it also includes primary, subnational, national and supranational elections (Asplund 2024).

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## INSTANCES OF MIS- AND DISINFORMATION NARRATIVES

The information environment refers to a dynamic space where people use tools (from pen and paper to artificial intelligence) to process and share information and make sense of the world. The information environment is therefore critical for informed decision making in a democracy. It includes interrelated actors, tools and outputs (like speeches, videos and digital content), all of which are also shaped by material and external factors. When this environment is distorted, the public's ability to make informed and independent decisions is compromised and so is democratic legitimacy. Problematic narratives, for example, often include both misinformation—which is inaccurate or incomplete and thus misleading, but spread unintentionally—and disinformation, which is deliberate. Part of wider malign influencing practices (Bicu n.d.), disinformation is designed to

deceive, manipulate or cause harm—often to erode trust, sow division and/or destabilize institutions. It is a component of hate speech, for example.

For a brief to be tagged with ‘instances of mis- and disinformation narratives’, it will include publicly reported instances (as covered by media reports, election observation missions, or other verified sources) of at least one of the following:

1. *Misinformation*. Information that is inaccurate or incomplete and unintentionally deceptive, causing confusion and distorting the facts available to voters during the election period.
2. *Disinformation*. Deliberate, harmful information designed to manipulate, deceive, undermine trust and/or cause division and instability during the election period.

### Important considerations

For the purpose of the GEM Codebook, this tag focuses specifically on misinformation and disinformation, while acknowledging that these are part of a wider spectrum of problematic narratives and information threats. It includes disinformation cyber-attacks on the wider electoral process (political actors, events) during the election period. Cyber-attacks targeting electoral systems themselves are tagged in ‘reported cyber-attacks’ (see below).

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## REPORTED CYBER-ATTACKS

International IDEA defines cyber threats as ‘all possible technology based on hostile and/or illegal acts designed to undermine the integrity of the electoral process’. Often, the extent of cyber threats is limited to elections using electronic voting systems; however, any online or technical tool used in the electoral process could be under threat from a cyber-attack (van der Staak and Wolf 2019).

For a brief to be tagged with ‘reported cyber-attacks’, it will include publicly reported instances (as covered by media reports, election observation missions, EMB websites, or other verified sources) of:

1. *Cyber-attacks on EMBs’ information and communication technologies*. Attacks by malign actors may include Denial of Service (DoS), Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) or phishing

attacks, ransomware, brute force attacks, Trojan horses, among others.

### **Important considerations**

The 'reported cyber-attack' tag is used for publicly reported cyber-attack incidents on the systems used by the EMBs during the election cycle, which may mean that the attack itself took place before the election year.

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## **ALLEGATIONS OF FRAUD**

The tag 'allegations of election fraud' focuses primarily on accusations of vote buying and/or financial irregularities relating to political party and candidate expenditure during the campaign period. Vote buying is an electoral malpractice that undermines the integrity of elections and is detrimental to democratic processes (Birch 2011; Joseph and Vashchanka 2022). Vote buying can take many forms, including monetary payments, services, goods and promises of future benefits. Financial irregularities primarily relate to illicit or improper financing of political parties, or where funds are used to bribe election administrators.

For a brief to be tagged with 'allegations of fraud', it will include publicly reported instances (as covered by media reports, election observation missions, EMB websites, or other verified sources) of at least one of the following:

1. *Allegations of vote buying.*
2. *Allegations of financial irregularities.*

### **Important considerations**

Allegations of financial irregularities include (but are not restricted to) allegations of illicit or improper financing of and expenditure by political parties or candidates.

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## Annex A. 2024 briefs

The 54 briefs in GEM focus on the following 50 countries. This makes up 80 per cent of all countries that had national elections in 2024. Countries not covered in GEM include Algeria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Chad, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Russia, Rwanda, Syria, Uzbekistan and Venezuela. In total, 62 countries held elections in 2024.

Austria	Ireland	Portugal
Bangladesh	Japan	Romania
Belgium	Kiribati	San Marino
Bhutan	Lithuania	Senegal x 2 briefs
Botswana	Madagascar	Slovakia
Bulgaria	Maldives	Soloman Islands
Comoros	Mauritania	South Africa
Croatia x 2 briefs	Mauritius	South Korea
Dominican Republic	Mexico	Sri Lanka x 2 briefs
El Salvador	Moldova	Taiwan
Finland	Mongolia	Togo
France	Mozambique	Tunisia
Georgia	Namibia	Tuvalu
Ghana	North Macedonia	United Kingdom
Iceland x 2 briefs	Pakistan	United States
India	Palau	Uruguay
Indonesia	Panama	

# About the authors

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He holds a Master's degree in International Studies from Uppsala University. Recent publications include *Elections during Emergencies and Crises: Lessons for Electoral Integrity from the Covid-19 Pandemic* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2023) and *Training and Professional Development in Electoral Administration* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2023).

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# About International IDEA

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization with 35 Member States founded in 1995, with a mandate to support sustainable democracy worldwide.

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## WHAT WE DO

We develop policy-friendly research related to elections, parliaments, constitutions, digitalization, climate change, inclusion and political representation, all under the umbrella of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We assess the performance of democracies around the world through our unique Global State of Democracy Indices and Democracy Tracker.

We provide capacity development and expert advice to democratic actors including governments, parliaments, election officials and civil society. We develop tools and publish databases, books and primers in several languages on topics ranging from voter turnout to gender quotas.

We bring states and non-state actors together for dialogues and lesson sharing. We stand up and speak out to promote and protect democracy worldwide.

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Our headquarters is in Stockholm, and we have regional and country offices in Africa and West Asia, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean. International IDEA is a Permanent Observer to the United Nations and is accredited to European Union institutions.

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<<https://www.idea.int>>

The Global Election Monitor (GEM) is a series of brief summaries of national elections. Each brief aims to identify risks to electoral integrity as well as identify prevention and mitigation practices.

GEM briefs are based on open-source information and highlight key developments described in news articles, reports from electoral management bodies and election observation reports. GEM is a qualitative dashboard. The summaries of national elections and respective tags of electoral integrity challenges are compiled based on desk research and analysis by International IDEA's Electoral Processes team, using a variety of keyword searches in search engines to find relevant and reliable information.

The dashboard typically covers countries that are regarded as being democratic as per International IDEA and Freedom House indices.