



H.E. U Hla Thein
Chairman
Union Election Commission
Office Building No. 22, Nay Pyi Taw
Myanmar

Stockholm, 16 October 2020

Our ref.: 160-20-31

Your Excellency,

International IDEA presents its compliments to H.E. U Hla Thein, Honorable Chairman of the Union Election Commission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

In reference to criticism voiced by domestic civil society and international actors in relation to the mVoter2020 application and the decisions taken by the Union Election Commission in response to our letters dated 5 and 7 October 2020, we would like to inform you that International IDEA has decided to withdraw our association with the application, and will refrain from promoting its use given the potential of some elements included in it to infringe on human rights and adversely affect election security and integrity.

While we fully understand the Union Election Commission's mandate and role in the preparation and implementation of the 2020 elections based on current election legislation, we also call on you to do everything within your powers and within the possibilities provided by the electoral legal framework to prevent the promotion or condoning of hate speech, of racism and discrimination and abuse of religion as per the 2008 Constitution and applicable laws. The disenfranchisement of the Rohingya community remains a serious and unresolved issue that the new parliament must address.

In relation to the publication of candidate data, we do not believe that the publication of ethnic and religious identification data is a requirement per current election legislation and we believe that the disclosure of such official candidate data should be voluntary and based on consent given by candidates. We also believe that information on the candidates' parents' ethnic and religious identity is insubstantial and irrelevant to an election, as has also been emphasized in previous election observation mission reports. We would like to reiterate herein our respectful suggestion that such information be taken out of the mVoter2020 application.

Candidates should never be targeted or harassed for their gender, ethnicity, or religion. Any public messages you can give in this regard would be an important signal to underline the prohibition of discrimination on such grounds as per the 2008 Constitution.

International IDEA avails itself of this opportunity to reaffirm the assurance of our highest consideration to the Union Election Commission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Casas-Zamora', is written over a circular stamp or seal. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr Kevin Casas-Zamora
Secretary-General