



CHECKS AND BALANCES NETWORK

BIRARADA.ORG

Democracy BAROMETER

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WE CALL ON TELEVISION AND RADIO CHANNELS TO ALLOW THE CANDIDATES EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The presidential election to take place on 10 August is a very special election. A president directly elected by the people will be ethically responsible to the people. In this process where citizens will cast their votes for the first time to elect the President of the Republic, television and radio channels are the most important vehicles for the candidates to communicate their messages. **As the Checks and Balances Network, we call on all television and radio channels to allow the candidates equal opportunity in their broadcasts so that a “fair, impartial and equal” environment of propaganda may be ensured.**

As voters have the opportunity to hear and get to know the candidates, they will use their votes in a better informed way. This is possible if the candidates describe what kind of a President they would be, to a large extent, through the media. Since the campaign period is only 30 days, it is very difficult for the candidates to tour all the provinces and meet citizens. Television and radio channels are of great importance for the candidates to be able to introduce themselves. For this reason, it is essential to provide each candidate with equal and fair access to the media. In campaign periods, television and radio channels have a responsibility to citizens for ensuring such equality and fairness. We citizens want to reach as much information about the candidates as possible before we cast our votes.¹

As the Checks and Balances Network, we therefore call on all television and radio channels to implement the following steps on a voluntary basis²:

- Give the candidates equal time in news bulletins and other relevant programmes you make during the campaign. Allow each candidate equal opportunity to voice his/her ideas to citizens.
- Provide all the candidates participating in the election with equal possibility in their campaign advertising times.
- If you allow a candidate the opportunity for free broadcasting time, allow the same opportunity to the other candidates.
- During the campaign, communicate through your broadcasts the positions and ideas of the candidates on basic issues and ensure that voters are informed.
- To show that you ensure equality, inform the public of the programmes in which the candidates have been given coverage, the lengths and broadcasting times of those programmes, any opportunities granted for free broadcasting time, and the lengths of any advertising you have broadcast concerning the candidates.

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¹ The media is the fourth power in the system of checks and balances. “For democracy culture to become widespread and established, we define checks and balances not just as separation of powers but as a way of life aimed at achieving social consensus. The system of checks and balances means that the legislative, the executive, the judiciary, the press, civil society, and citizens check and balance each other’s power for a democratic social order in the framework of their respective duties and responsibilities.” For detailed information see “What are Checks and Balances?” The Checks and Balances Network, <http://birarada.org/kategori/denge-denetleme-ndir>

² The good practices in question are taken from the principles of good practices titled “Elections and Political Advertising on TV and Radio” of the Radio, Television and Communication Commission of Canada. For more detailed information see Elections and Political Advertising on TV and Radio, http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/info_sht/b309.htm. In New Zealand, the law requires every broadcasting channel to report such details to the Election Committee. For detailed information see Electoral Integrity, Electoral Campaign, <http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/ei/eif/eif08/eif08a>.