



PRESS RELEASE

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Preliminary list includes most voters but still needs improvement

An independent audit of the preliminary voters list has found that most eligible voters in Indonesia have been registered to vote in the 2009 national elections. The audit found that 79.2% of all potential voters are on the preliminary voters list. "While this is an acceptable rate for a preliminary list, a lot of work needs to be done in order to ensure that as many voters as possible are included in the final list," said Fajar Nursahid, who headed the project. A similar audit of the final voters list prior to the 2004 legislative elections found a registration rate of 91%, a fairly high level when compared with international rates.

Unfortunately, the audit also showed that few voters were aware of the time period for verifying that their names are recorded. "Our findings show that only 7.3% of voters acknowledge the period of temporary voters list (DPS) registration checking, which is from August 8 to 14, 2008," said Fajar. "While the registration rate is not bad for a preliminary list, the remaining 20.8% need to have an opportunity to add their names. It is difficult for them to do so if they are not aware of the remaining one day to give inputs to the voters' list and the procedure," he added.

A Voter Registration Audit (VRA) is a systematic and scientific evaluation of the quality of voter registration. The VRA was implemented by Institute for Social and Economic Research, Education and Information (LP3ES), with technical assistance from the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The VRA utilizes a two-way audit method involving a: (a) List to People Test, which checks that names on the voters list actually belong to eligible voters. The test also verifies the voter information of each selected name on the list; and (b) People to List Test, which assesses whether eligible voters are absent from the voters list. The VRA was conducted from August 7 to 11, 2008 by more than 520 volunteer enumerators who interviewed more than 7,800 respondents selected using statistical methods. The margin of error is +/- 2.5% for the national sample and +/- 5% for the regional analysis at a 95% confidence level.

The VRA showed that 19.8% of voters listed in the DPS did not actually reside at the indicated addresses. Some of these voters had temporarily or permanently relocated. The VRA also found that another 3.3% of the names included in the DPS should actually have been removed. This included deceased people, unknown names and addresses, and ineligible voters (those under the age of 17 by the time of the elections and those in the military).

Accuracy is another factor in evaluating the quality of the voters list. The two-way test also found that the voters list was 39.5% accurate for Civil Registry Number (NIK), 67.9% accurate on voters' names, 77.1% accurate on voters' genders, 58.8% accurate on voters' birth dates, and 68.6% accurate on voters' addresses.

Although the actual level of registration was close to 80%, less than two-thirds (62.8%) of voters actually believe that they were registered, 15% of voters believed that they were unregistered, and 22.2% of voters did not know whether they were registered or not. Unfortunately, fewer than a half (48.1%) of those surveyed said that they intended to check their registration status, while 36.6% admitted that they would not check their registration status, and only 3.4% had actually checked their registration status.

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Based on the interviews with Village Elections Committee (PPS) members or Village Registration Committee (PPDP) members, it was evident that there was uncertainty on whether to use the *de jure* or *de facto* principles during the registration process. *De jure* refers to using the address listed on the family card or national identity card as a basis for voter registration, while *de facto* refers to using the actual address in which the voter lives. In relation to *de facto* and *de jure* principles, from respondents who had other residences (8%), 29% of them admitted to having secondary Identification Cards (KTP) from those other residences. When the *de jure* principle is applied, having more than one KTP can cause double registered-voters. On the other hand, if the *de facto* principle is used, extensive revisions to the voters list could be required in order to verify actual addresses.

In addition to the voter registration process, enumerators asked questions about the election process generally; an interesting finding was that a majority of voters (79.7%) still thought that the 2009 elections would use a punch-ballot method, as was done for the 2004 elections. Only 4.4% of voters were aware of the new method – using a pencil or pen to make a check mark on the ballot. The KPU should consider this finding in designing their voter education campaign and training programs for polling station officials.

Considering the findings mentioned above, LP3ES proposes the following:

1. The KPU should consider extending the registration (DPS) schedule. The new schedule should allow sufficient working days to complete the voter registration process.
2. The KPU should perform an immediate internal evaluation examining the announcement period of the DPS to assess whether the existing dissemination activities have been optimal at the regional level.
3. The KPU should prioritize accuracy over speed in finalizing the voters list. If the internal evaluation results indicate that more time is needed to revise the voters list, the KPU should consider extending the voters list updating period or re-releasing the DPS to the public so that people can recheck the voters list. As the elections will take place in eight months, there is, in fact, ample time to include more voters and improve the accuracy. A simulation conducted by LP3ES has demonstrated that the voters list could still be finalized by November 2008 even if more time is allotted for additions to the list.
4. The KPU should consider clarifying whether *de jure* or *de facto* principles should be used in order to avoid ambiguities at the regional level.
5. The KPU should highlight the change in voting method in designing their voter education campaign and training programs for polling station officials.
6. Local government officials such as Mayors, Regents and Sub-district heads should mobilize their networks to encourage voters to check the list. In addition, political parties and civil society organizations should mobilize their members.
7. If the KPU does extend the registration period, the media should use its power to reach out and encourage citizens to check the list and make sure that they will be able to vote.

LP3ES, founded in 1971, is a non-profit organization that has a broad network and experience in social research and regularly conducts public opinion surveys. NDI is a non-profit, non-governmental organization based in Washington DC with a mission to strengthen democracy worldwide and has worked with local organizations in election monitoring in more than 35 countries. LP3ES and NDI conducted a voter registration audit prior to the 2004 general elections and prior to the 2007 Jakarta gubernatorial election. The organizations cooperated in the implementation of Quick Count observations for the 2004 general and presidential elections and Jakarta's gubernatorial election.

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