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Uganda: Election monitoring must incorporate respect for fundamental rights

Amnesty International is calling on governments which are sending monitors to the Ugandan Parliamentary elections to ensure that human rights during the election process are given consistent and vigorous attention. The elections are scheduled for 26 June 2001.

Election monitoring cannot truly assess the freedom, fairness and transparency of elections without paying serious consideration to human rights issues, regarding these as fundamental and intrinsic to the process," the organization said today.

In an advisory sent to diplomatic representatives in Uganda and other members of the international community, Amnesty International sets out human rights guidelines for parliamentary election monitors, urging the international community to assume its responsibility to report any human rights violations committed during the election process.

Monitors should pay particular attention to the right to freedom of expression and association and to peaceful assembly at public gatherings, the organization stressed. Details of human rights concerns in the country are to be found in Amnesty International's document, "A Human Rights Manifesto for Uganda: What needs to be done"¹, which is being sent with the advisory.

During parliamentary elections, monitors should report all evidence of human rights violations through proper and explicit channels. The Ugandan authorities should then conduct independent investigations where evidence of violations exists, and anyone found responsible should be brought to justice.

"While respect for fundamental human rights is the key to realizing truly free and fair elections, the lack of freedom of expression, association and assembly can result in serious violations of those rights" the organization added.

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