

1994

EMPSA Rules

Ecumenical Monitoring Programme in South Africa

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EMPSA MONITORS

EMPSA RULES

Please note contents carefully, particularly with regard to reporting and publicity, and official meetings and correspondence.

These "rules and regulations" were drawn up after consultation with regional EMPSA representatives and monitors, and have been discussed and agreed by the National Coordinating Committee of EMPSA. This document is subject to further addition and clarification as the need arises.

1. GENERAL

EMPSA monitors during their stay in South Africa are responsible to the National Coordinator, who acts on the authority of the Chairman and the National Coordinating Committee of EMPSA.

Overall direction of the programme is the responsibility of the National Coordinator, who should be referred to on all occasions where the course of the programme or the image of EMPSA may be affected.

The day-to-day programmes of monitors are generally drawn up *by the teams in consultation with* EMPSA sub-regional and area coordinators. The work of the monitor/s can also be discussed with representatives of the local EMPSA committees, which will include church and para-church partner agencies. After the first week of initial introduction to the area and work, each team can make many of the contacts and arrangements themselves, under the guidance of the coordinators.

Any change, redeployment, extension of visit, or travel outside the area of deployment, etc, must first be discussed with the National Coordinator.

All written correspondence with political organisations, police, military or government authorities, observer missions etc, must first be cleared with the National Coordinator. Any official meetings at the regional level with, for example, IEC or TEC structures, police or political leadership, should be raised first with the national office to ensure that any relevant background is known and communicated prior to the meeting. (*see 4 below*)

Insurance, per diem allowances and air travel to South Africa are the responsibility of the sending agency. In some cases this is through the World Council of Churches. Internal travel for EMPSA monitors and local accommodation is covered by EMPSA National Office, through regional arrangements.

Any personal travel (for example if the monitor takes a day off to go to the beach etc) must be covered personally. As monitors are the responsibility of EMPSA during their monitoring term, they should at all times keep local coordinator/ agency or the National Office informed of their whereabouts.

No non-EMPSA business should be conducted during the monitoring term, either for the monitor or on behalf of the sending agency. If it is proposed that monitors undertake non-EMPSA work after the monitoring term, this should first be raised with the National Coordinator.

2. Publicity:

Most monitors sign a letter of understanding with their sending agencies which outline conditions under which returned monitors can write articles or give interviews. Guidelines are also discussed during the briefing sessions on arrival in South Africa.

Regarding communications and publicity, two main factors must be kept in mind: one is that each monitor is working as part of a broader team and their reports are part of that broader work. Secondly, and related to this, the monitors have a certain privileged access to all sections of the communities in which they work and if portions of a report are misused, or injudicious statements are made, the standing of monitors elsewhere or later in the programme could be adversely affected. As a programme, EMPSA needs to be sure that when it makes a statement dealing with a controversial issue, it is well-considered and cannot be easily discredited.

Monitors may not publish anything or give any interviews during their monitoring stay without first discussing it with the National Communications Officer. It should be borne in mind at all times that anything published or broadcast in which a monitor is quoted will have a bearing on the EMPSA programme.

On return to their own countries, monitors are requested not to speak on behalf of EMPSA. Articles, books etc which are written, or any interviews given about the situation in South Africa should clearly distinguish that the views expressed are personal. Where these views may be controversial, for example if they are obviously in support of a particular organisation or against another, they should not be linked to the monitoring work in any way. Monitors are advised to sustain a sense of responsibility for the whole programme, and consult with their coordinated sending centre/ agencies in their countries to ensure that their public contributions are constructive and do not adversely implicate the programme. It would be damaging, for example, if EMPSA had to make public statements distancing ourselves from statements of ex-monitors.

Whether in South Africa or after returning home, monitors must not name specific local people or locations or times if this is likely to incriminate or endanger individuals or organisations. It is preferable to tell stories of people, incidents, or situations to illustrate points. Refer to types of people (police officer or local pastor) and general regions (Natal or Transvaal, etc.). Be as objective as you can regarding actions or positions taken by South African individuals or organizations. Please be clear that you are speaking as an individual and not on behalf of EMPSA.

3. *Monitors Reports:*

Monitors are expected to submit three types of reports to the EMPSA National Office. These include daily team reports during the election period; weekly reports which summarize and reflect on events and findings of the previous week; and final reports to EMPSA at the end of their monitoring term, before they leave South Africa. *These reports are submitted to the National Office. They are confidential, and not for publication in any form.* EMPSA includes the main content of the reports, after it has been summarised and checked with the regional partners, in the published EMPSA Bulletins and the final Election Report.

The monitors can discuss their reports with the EMPSA committees, coordinators, or representatives in the regions. However, no copies of the reports should be made available except to, or by arrangement with, the National Office.

Monitors are expected to consult the National Communications Officer on an on-going basis during the course of their monitoring term. No publicity is undertaken from the National Office without full consultation with monitors, coordinators, or other relevant people.

There may frequently be occasions when immediate reports, no matter how incomplete, should be submitted where monitors are engaged in urgent or very significant work. (This means the National Office is in a good position to respond, should a serious situation arise, and can also advise or intervene if necessary.)

The reports are written by the monitors and are their work. The good team working relationship would mean that, as with the work programme itself, the monitors would discuss their reports with the coordinator, who can give advice and make suggestions, especially on factual matters. If the monitors and coordinator seriously disagree, or the coordinator feels the National Office needs additional information or interpretation, he/she should submit a separate report. The coordinator has no authority to correct, edit, rewrite the monitors' reports. Monitors are asked to submit joint reports, but if the monitors themselves substantially disagree with each other on aspects or sections of their report, they can submit separate sections within the overall report.

Monitors should not share written reports bi-laterally with sending agencies/centres during the monitoring term except by special agreement with the National Office. Nor should the reports be given by monitors to other individuals or representatives of any organisations, or with any publishers during or after the monitoring term.

The National Office may, at its discretion during the election period, share the contents of some reports with the IEC or other monitoring/observation agencies.

4. *Meetings/correspondence with political leadership, police, observer missions, monitoring organisations*

Monitors are expected to meet, as part of their programme of work, local political leadership, police, community organisations etc. They will also be attending meetings, for example local peace committees, which include many local players. There will often be the opportunity for

informal discussion as well. At a formal level, it may be necessary to raise or respond to complaints etc. Anything written on behalf of EMPSA should be cleared by the National Office.

Meetings to share information for operational purposes with observer missions, other observers/monitors, or peace secretariat structures help make our work more effective. The National Office should be kept informed of such meetings.

No operational monitors can meet officially with major political or other leadership. This is the role of the Eminent Delegations for EMPSA which are to raise issues agreed nationally which have been identified in the work of the monitors.

5. *National Debriefings*

Monitors are expected to allow time at the end of their programme to debrief the National Coordinator on their monitoring experience, and any related matters, or individual concerns. However, with the expanded Election Team, this may in some cases be difficult to arrange.

Departure dates and arrangements will be made in discussion with the sub-regional coordinators, and the National Office must be advised in good time.

6. *EMPSA property*

Monitors are asked to take good care of EMPSA property. We function on a small budget and need to respect the needs of the programme. This includes rented furnished accommodation. It particularly includes EMPSA cars and the cars rented by EMPSA. In some areas, much travel is required on dirt roads which requires great care to prevent accidents, as well as undue wear, tear and damage. Inexperienced drivers should take advice and local coordinators may advise that some monitors should not drive. *It is stressed that driving can be dangerous, especially in unfamiliar areas, and monitors are asked to heed this warning at all times.* In most cases, area coordinators will be the drivers.

7. *EMPSA vehicles*

Vehicles are provided for monitors in each region: they are for EMPSA work only. On no account are monitors to be left without transport, unless under circumstances agreed upon by all parties. The cars are the property of EMPSA, or are rented by EMPSA, and are intended for the duration of this busy programme. During the election period, some transport is made available by assistant coordinators under specific arrangement with the National Office.

EMPSA vehicles must be clearly identified with the programme, and must only be driven by EMPSA staff and monitors. *Anyone who is not part of EMPSA should not travel in an EMPSA car. This especially applies to journalists.* The only exceptions may be when EMPSA monitors, in the interests of saving lives, have taken injured people to hospital. Other exceptions directly related to monitoring work (assisting a human rights lawyer or another monitor) may be considered, but in each case the direct implications for the programme must be carefully discussed and weighed up first.

8. *Teamwork*

EMPSA monitors are drawn from many cultures and speak many languages. They will generally be working in teams of four with a local coordinator. This challenge has been described as "five cultures in a small car."

In developing the deployments, an effort was made to ensure that at least one person in the group spoke English as their first language. This is a practical plan to assist particularly with writing reports, but it does not imply that the English-speaker is the leader or must do all the writing. For all monitors, it is important to speak clearly and carefully, avoiding jargon and slang. If a person in a team speaks a South African language other than English, they should be helpful to other members of the team, and not use their linguistic skills in an exclusive way.

The teams should be models of good cooperation: sharing of tasks and leadership can be done informally or, if the group consents, on a revolving basis. It is most important thing to keep talking with each other. Remember as well that local coordinators are chosen because they know their local communities. They are guides and resources for monitors.

It is recommended that teams gather each evening to "debrief" (talk about) the day. It is likely that not everyone will have understood everything that happened that day in the same way. The challenge of language demands extra effort to ensure that everyone understands. Similarly, before making a critical decision about specific activities, it is important that everyone understands the choices and their possible consequences.

On many occasions, monitors will be interviewing people (political leaders, witnesses, police, etc). Always remember to be polite; greetings are very important. If the team can plan its line of questioning in advance, all the better. Try to work out what information is sought, and decide who will ask the first question. After that, the conversation may open up. On the other hand, it may be advisable to have just one person ask all the questions, or ask questions up until a certain point when someone else takes over. Other members of the team should not interrupt or contradict each other. If one person does not understand a specific point, it is advisable to wait for clarification until after the interview rather than interrupt the flow. While being polite, monitors should not explicitly agree (or commit EMPSA to agreeing) with their subject's point-of-view or analysis.

Sometimes interviews will have to be done through a translator. This takes longer than other kinds of conversations, and requires patience. Only one person should speak at any given time. Pause between phrases, and give translators enough time to repeat what has been said.

9. *Monitors' safety and other guidelines*

In general, no guarantees of safety can be given by EMPSA to any monitors.

Monitors are dependent on coordinators who will in most cases be well-informed in a local area and will usually be able to judge whether a situation is sufficiently safe for the monitors to work

there. Situations can change suddenly, and where necessary the coordinator will advise immediate withdrawal.

For election work, coordination with local IEC (Independent Electoral Commission) and NEON (National Electoral Observer Network) structures will include sharing of information about safety conditions in certain areas. The IEC may also develop contingency evacuation plans. Any further clarification which emerges from the IEC, police etc will be communicated immediately to all sub-regions.

Liaison Monitors must inform the National Office immediately of any worrying incidents which should be drawn to the attention of the IEC regionally and nationally, or raised with political leadership or police/military.

Many embassies are providing 24-hour contact numbers for emergency during the election period as most of them have large numbers of their nationals in the country in this period. They have been asked to supply these to EMPSA for our monitors. All embassies are informed of the presence, names and places of deployment of their nationals on the EMPSA programme. Sending agencies are also provided with these details.

EMPSA monitors are reminded to dress appropriately while working: no shorts; women should generally wear skirts, especially when attending funerals.

Monitors are advised to take special precautions while in the Johannesburg area. Valuables should be kept in the hotel safe. Monitors should not walk alone, especially at night. In the case of a mugging, no resistance should be made; the incident should be reported to the National Office and to the police.