



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Republic of the Philippines

Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

Office of the Chief Minister

Office for Settler Communities

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Memorandum Order No. 01
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**General Guidelines on the 2025 Assembly of Settler Organizations (SOs)
and Sectoral Wings of Regional Parliamentary Political Parties (RPPPs)
in the BARMM for the Election of the Two Settler Communities’
Representatives in the Bangsamoro Parliament**

ARTICLE I. LEGAL BASIS

SECTION 1. *Legal Basis.* – This *Guidelines* is based on the following legal provisions:

- a. *Section 1, Article X* of the *Bangsamoro Autonomy Act (BAA) No. 35* or the *Bangsamoro Electoral Code (BEC)* provides that “[i]n the first Parliamentary election, the selection of the sectoral representatives for the reserved seats in the Parliament shall be on the basis of election during assemblies especially called for the purpose by registered and accredited sectoral organizations of women, settlers, youth, ‘*Ulama*, traditional leaders and Non-Moro Indigenous Peoples.”
- b. *Section 1, Article IX* of *Resolution No. 10984* of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) or the *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)* of *BAA No. 35*, provides: “For the sectoral representatives of NMIP, Traditional Leaders and ‘*Ulama*, the assemblies shall be called by registered and accredited sectoral organizations through their respective ministries, regional agencies, or offices and shall be conducted in the manner provided in this *IRR* (COMELEC Resolution No. 10984).

For the sectoral representatives of women, youth, and settler communities, the assemblies shall be called by registered and accredited sectoral organizations through their respective ministries, regional agencies, or offices which shall likewise facilitate the conduct thereof.”

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

SECTION 1. *Purpose.* – This *Guidelines* is issued for the following purposes:

- a. In compliance with the mandate of the Office for Settler Communities (OSC) to call for an assembly of registered and/or accredited Settler Organizations (SOs) and the Sectoral Wings for settler communities of registered and/or accredited Regional Parliamentary Political Parties (RPPPs) and for the purpose of electing the two sectoral representatives for settler communities.
- b. In order to establish a transparent, organized, and democratic process for the conduct of the Assembly of the SOs and Sectoral Wings for the settler communities and provide for the manner of election of the two sectoral representatives for settler communities in the Bangsamoro Parliament that is consistent with the principles laid down in *BAA No. 35* and *COMELEC Resolution No. 10984*.

ARTICLE III. SCOPE

SECTION 1. *Scope.* – This *Guidelines* shall apply to the selection of the delegates and the nominees to the Assembly of the SOs and Sectoral Wings for settler communities and the manner of election of the sectoral representatives for settler communities in the Bangsamoro Parliament for the 2025 Parliamentary elections in the BARMM.

SECTION 2. *Eligibility to Participate in Assemblies.* – Only those Parliamentary Sectoral Organizations (PSOs) representing settler communities and RPPPs by way of their Sectoral Wings that have submitted a 1) Certificate of Registration issued by the Commission; 2) Proof of Publication; and 3) Manifestation of Intent to participate in Parliamentary Representation System (MIP-PSRS) in the form prescribed by the Commission shall be allowed to participate in the Assembly in compliance with *Sections 5 (d), 6, and 15, Rule II, of Article VI* of the *IRR*. Provided that the Clerk of the Commission shall publish a list of the PSOs who submitted their MIP-PSRS and complied with the order to publish the same, which shall be deemed compliance of the PSOs. No additional or conflicting requirements may be imposed.¹

¹ *Section 1 of COMELEC Resolution No. 11166, otherwise known as A Resolution Recommending to the Office of the Settler Communities the Adoption of Supplemental Provisions to the General Guidelines on the 2025 Assembly of Settler Organizations (SOs) and Sectoral Wings of Regional Parliamentary Political Parties (RPPPs) in the BARMM for the Election of the Two Settler Communities' Representative in the Bangsamoro Parliament, as a supplemental provision, incorporated in this Guidelines. Includes OSC amendment of the term “representing Settler Organizations (SOs)” to read as “representing settler communities.”*

ARTICLE IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

SECTION 1. *Definition of Terms.* –The specific terms as used in this *Guidelines* shall have the following meaning:

- a. **Assembly** refers to the 2025 assembly of registered and accredited settler organizations (SOs) and RPPPs (by way of their Sectoral Wing) for the settler communities sector for the purpose of electing the two settler representatives in the Bangsamoro Parliament as provided under *Section 1, Article X* of BAA No. 35.
- b. **Assembly Day Delegates List (ADDL)** refers to the official list of SOs or RPPP Sectoral Wings with the corresponding names of their official delegates who have registered and submitted their credentials in the morning of the scheduled Assembly.
- c. **Assembly Election Returns (AER)** refers to the official document, duly signed by the members of the Electoral Committee, showing the date and venue of the election and the votes, in words and in figures, obtained for each nominee.
- d. **Delegate** refers to the official representative of a duly certified and accredited settler organization (SO) or a Sectoral Wing, who is duly authorized to attend the Assembly and cast his/her vote for and in behalf of the SO or a Sectoral Wing.
- e. **Nominee** refers to a person duly nominated by duly certified and accredited settler organization/Sectoral Wing as a candidate for sectoral representative for settler communities and whose name appears in the duly published list of nominees by the OSC. A nominee is automatically the delegate of his/her nominating SO or Sectoral Wing.
- f. **Manifestation of Intent to Participate in the Parliamentary Sectoral Representation System (MIP-PSRS)** refers to the form prescribed by COMELEC for parliamentary sectoral organizations and Regional Parliamentary Political Parties by way of their Sectoral Wing intending to participate in the parliamentary elections.
- g. **Quorum** to conduct business during the Assembly shall be determined by a simple majority (50% + 1) of all SOs and RPPP Sectoral Wings that are duly certified by the OSC and accredited by COMELEC and are present during the Assembly.
- h. **Sectoral Wing** refers to a settler communities' sectoral organization that is affiliated with a COMELEC-registered and/or accredited Regional Parliamentary Political Party.

- i. **Settler Organizations (SOs)** are voluntary organizations, associations, and federations of associations, consortia, alliances, and coalitions whose members are from the settler communities in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region.

ARTICLE V. PRE-ASSEMBLY ACTIVITIES

SECTION 1. *Call for the 2025 Assembly of the SOs and Sectoral Wings for Settler Communities.* – The OSC shall issue a Notice of Assembly indicating the specific date, time, venue, agenda, and other relevant details of the Assembly. The Notice must be issued at least fifteen (15) calendar days from the actual date of Assembly. The Notice shall be sent via text message to the registered contact number and email address of all the duly registered and accredited SOs and Sectoral Wings. It shall likewise be posted on the official websites of the OSC, Bangsamoro Government, and Bangsamoro Parliament.

SECTION 2. *Designation of Delegates and Nominees.* – A qualified SO or RPPP Sectoral Wing is entitled to two (2) delegates to the Assembly, each of whom having the right to vote for the two (2) settler representatives to the Bangsamoro Parliament.

The SO or Sectoral Wing shall issue a resolution, in a form prescribed by the OSC, designating two (2) from among its qualified members as the official delegates of the organization.

If the SO or RPPP Sectoral Wing nominates a candidate/s to the Assembly, such nominee shall automatically be the official delegate/s of the concerned organization. A delegate who is also the nominee shall similarly be issued with a resolution specifically authorizing him/her to be to attend and vote during the Assembly, for and in behalf of the concerned organization.

The manner of selection of the delegate must be in accordance with the established internal selection process of the SO or Sectoral Wing and consistent with its constitution and by-laws.

SECTION 3. *Qualifications of a Delegate to the Assembly.* – No SO or Sectoral Wing member shall qualify as a delegate to the Assembly unless he/she meets the following qualifications:

- a. A registered voter in the BARMM;
- b. A bona fide member of the Settler Communities sector, **as evidenced by a Certificate of Membership issued by the OSC;** and
- c. A member in good standing as certified by the PSO/SO and the Sectoral Wing of an RPPP.²

² Qualifications of a Delegate under *Section 2 of COMELEC Resolution No. 11166*

SECTION 4. *Qualifications of a Nominee to the Assembly.* – No SO or Sectoral Wing member shall qualify as a nominee to the Assembly unless he/she meets the following qualifications:

- a. A citizen of the Philippines;
- b. At least twenty-five (25) years of age on the day of the election;
- c. Able to read and write;
- d. A registered voter in the BARMM; and
- e. A bona fide member of the Settler Communities sector, **as evidenced by a Certificate of Membership issued by the OSC.**³

ARTICLE VI. PRE-REGISTRATION

SECTION 1. *Schedule of Filing of Nomination of Candidates.* – The OSC shall schedule the filing of Nomination of Candidates for Sectoral Assembly within fifteen (15) calendar days from the actual date of Assembly.

SECTION 2. *Personal Submission of Requirements for Nominee.* – Any SO or Sectoral Wing that intends to field a nominee shall submit personally to the OSC the following requirements:

- a. Sworn Certificate of Nomination and Acceptance (CONA) of the nominee;
- b. Certificate of Registration and/or Accreditation of the SO or Sectoral Wing issued by COMELEC;
- c. Settler Organization Certificate issued by the OSC; and
- d. Certification of Membership issued by the OSC which must contain the following:
 - i. That the nominee has a track record of outstanding and relevant involvement, accomplishments, and ethical behavior in the community and sector being represented, evidenced by a list of community or sectoral engagement;
 - ii. Signature of the head of the OSC; and
 - iii. Official seal of the OSC.

SECTION 3. *Acceptance of the Filing of Nomination of Candidate.* – Upon submission of the aforementioned documents and finding them to be in order, it shall be ministerial on the part of the OSC to accept the filing of nomination of a candidate for the Assembly.

SECTION 4. *Effect of Late Filing of Nomination of Candidate.* – Late filing of nomination beyond the prescribed period will not be accepted and the concerned nominee will not be listed for voting in the Assembly.

³ Qualifications of a Nominee under *Section 2 of COMELEC Resolution No. 11166*

SECTION 5. *Publication of Official List of Nominees.* – The official list of nominees shall be published in the OSC and the BARMM websites and social media accounts at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the scheduled date of the Assembly.

ARTICLE VII. ENTRY AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

SECTION 1. *Registration of Delegates.* – Registration will start at six o'clock (6:00) in the morning and end at twelve o'clock (12:00) noontime.

A delegate shall be required to present: 1) a valid government ID; 2) original copy of the Resolution by the SO or Sectoral Wing designating him/her as a delegate to the Assembly; 3) the original or a certified true copy of the certificate of registration and/or accreditation issued by COMELEC; and 4) a certified true copy of the Settler Organization Certificate issued by the OSC. Any person who fails to submit the aforementioned documents shall not be registered as a delegate and will not be allowed to enter the Assembly Venue nor be allowed to participate in the voting.

No delegate will be allowed to register after 12:00 o'clock noontime unless he/she is within 100 meters from the registration area at the closing hour of registration. In such instance, the Poll Clerk shall record the names of the persons found within 100 meters from the registration area in the Minutes.

SECTION 2. *The Secretariat.* –Under the supervision of the Rules Committee, the Secretariat will be responsible in administering the registration of delegates and prepare the Assembly Day list of delegates that will be entitled to participate and vote during the Assembly.

SECTION 3. *Assembly Hours.* – The Assembly shall begin at one o'clock (1:00) in the afternoon and end at five o'clock (5:00) in the afternoon or until the counting of votes and announcement of the result of the voting is completed.

ARTICLE VIII. HOUSE RULES FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE ASSEMBLY AND PARTICIPATION

SECTION 1. *Attendance and Participation.* – Only registered delegates and nominees are allowed to attend and participate in the Assembly. However, the following non-delegates shall be permitted entry:

- a. Committee Members and OSC personnel;
- b. COMELEC-BEO Representatives;
- c. COMELEC Accredited Media;
- d. Representatives from COMELEC-Accredited Citizen's Arms, such as civil society organizations, who will observe the proceedings and the conduct of a clean, free, and honest election; and

- e. Legal Counsel of the nominee who shall submit to the Rules Committee his/her appointment as such, together with his/her credentials, at least three (3) calendar days prior to the schedule of the Assembly, and may represent the nominee in the event of any legal dispute arising from the conduct of the Assembly, the qualifications of a nominee, or the validity of the Assembly Election Returns.

SECTION 2. *Respect and Decorum.* – All delegates, nominees and observers must maintain respect and decorum, avoid personal attacks and disruptive behavior and refrain from using scandalous, inflammatory, foul, abusive, and derogatory language.

SECTION 3. *Speaking Order.* – Any delegate who wishes to speak must raise his/her hand to be recognized by the Chairperson. Speeches should be brief and concise and relevant to the agenda.

SECTION 4. *Prohibition Against Campaign Paraphernalia.* – Campaign paraphernalia are not allowed within the Assembly venue.

SECTION 5. *Prohibition Against Political Activity by a Committee Member.* – No member of any committee is allowed, directly or indirectly, to campaign for or against a nominee.

SECTION 6. *Media Coverage.* – Media accredited by COMELEC may cover the proceedings non-intrusively and within designated areas allowed by the Rules Committee. They are not allowed in the voting area.

SECTION 7. *Security.* – The OSC shall coordinate with the Ministry of Interior and Local Government (MILG) for the proper coordination with the Philippine National Police in securing the premises of the Assembly venue. Firearms shall not be allowed inside the Assembly venue.

SECTION 8. *Confidentiality.* – Non-delegates, media, and citizen's arms must comply with the *Data Privacy Act of 2012*.

SECTION 9. *Venue.* – The Assembly shall be held at the Shariff Kabunsuan Cultural Complex (SKCC), Bangsamoro Government Center, Cotabato City.

SECTION 10. *Special Assistance.* – Delegates requiring special assistance, such as persons with disabilities, pregnant women and senior citizens, are entitled to be prioritized in the order of registration and voting.

SECTION 11. *Delegate's Assistance Desk (DAD).* – Delegates Assistance Desk (DAD) shall be available in strategic areas of the venue to guide and assist delegates and provide proper orientation on the procedure and manner of voting during the Assembly.

SECTION 12. *Medical Team.* – A medical team shall be present outside the assembly venue for the provision of emergency medical care and first aid when needed.

ARTICLE IX. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

SECTION 1. *Avoidance of Conflict of Interest.* – To avoid conflict of interest, any official or employee of the OSC who has accepted a nomination to be a settler communities sectoral representative shall recuse himself/herself from participating in any of the Assembly proceedings or preparations pertaining thereto.

SECTION 2. *Disqualifications as Assembly Chairperson, or as member in the Rules Committee or Election Committee.* – Among other disqualifications set by the *Bangsamoro Electoral Code*, its *IRR*, or other applicable law, in no instance may the Assembly Chairperson, or any member of the Rules Committee or Election Committee, be related to a delegate or nominee of a participating PSO or RPPP, whether through its sectoral organization or any of its officers, within the fourth civil degree of consanguinity or affinity.⁴

SECTION 3. *Role of the COMELEC during the Assembly.* – COMELEC representatives shall act only as observers and monitors in the conduct of the Assembly, without voting rights or involvement in the credentials verification, selection, or decision-making processes, to preserve the Commission’s impartial adjudicatory role in resolving disputes.⁵

ARTICLE X. THE COMMITTEES AND THE ROLES

SECTION 1. *Electoral Committee.* – The OSC personnel shall compose the Electoral Committee. The **Office for Settler Communities** shall be responsible for appointing the Chairperson, the Poll Clerk, and a third member **from among its personnel**. These officers may also temporarily appoint any delegate to perform the duties of the Assembly officers, upon authority given by the Chairperson, and to take necessary actions to maintain order in the Assembly area.⁶

The Poll Clerk shall be responsible for maintaining and keeping the minutes of all proceedings and incidents that occur during the Assembly.⁷

⁴ New paragraph to be added under *Section 8* of *COMELEC Resolution No. 11166* as a COMELEC supplemental provision to further strengthen safeguards against conflicts of interest

⁵ Also a new paragraph to be added under *Section 8* of *COMELEC Resolution No. 11166*

⁶ Second *paragraph* under *Section 3* of *COMELEC Resolution No. 11166* as a COMELEC supplemental provision and amendment to *Section 1* of *Article X* of the *Guidelines* draft, in conformity with *Section 1*, *Article IX* of the *BEC*

⁷ *Third paragraph* under *Section 3* of *COMELEC Resolution No. 11166*

SECTION 2. *Duties and Functions of the Electoral Committee.* – The Electoral Committee shall perform the following duties and functions:

- a. Supervise and conduct the voting in the voting place;
- b. Count the votes and thereafter prepare the Assembly returns and other required documents/reports and distribute the same as herein provided; and
- c. **Decide, through its Chairperson, all questions arising in the performance of its duties by majority vote and without delay. Any opposition to the decision of the Electoral Committee shall be submitted to the OSC in accordance with the rules on Post-Election Activities under *Section 2, Article XVI* of this *Guidelines*. Provided, that an opposition to the qualification of the nominees shall be directly filed with the OSC.**⁸

SECTION 3. *Rules Committee; Composition.* – Rules Committee shall be established to oversee the development, implementation, and review of the procedures and guidelines governing the conduct of the Assembly. The Committee shall consist of the following:

- a. One (1) representative from the OSC;
- b. One (1) representative from the Bangsamoro Youth Commission (BYC); and
- c. One (1) representative from the Bangsamoro Women’s Commission (BWC).⁹

The Rules Committee shall perform the following duties and functions:

- a. Ensure that the *Guidelines* are properly implemented and resolve gaps and challenges arising in the course of the conduct of the sectoral Assembly;
- b. Verify the credentials of nominees and ensure they meet qualification criteria;
- c. Validate and approve the ADDL submitted by the Secretariat; and
- d. Address and interpret procedural rules and resolve disputes, except election-specific procedural matters, which are directly handled by the electoral committee.

SECTION 4. *Secretariat.* – The Secretariat shall handle the registration of the delegates and shall be under the supervision of the Rules Committee. It shall be composed of six (6) members who shall be appointed by the Rules Committee and shall consist of the following:

- a. Two (2) representatives from the OSC;
- b. Two (2) representatives from the Bangsamoro Youth Commission (BYC); and
- c. Two (2) representatives from the Bangsamoro Women’s Commission (BWC).

⁸ *Fourth paragraph* under *Section 3* of COMELEC Resolution No. 11166

⁹ *Section 4* of COMELEC Resolution No. 11166 as COMELEC amendment to align with the mandate of OSC, as provided in *Section 1, Article X* of the BEC

The Rules Committee may appoint additional members of the Secretariat as it deems necessary to provide technical and logistical support.

ARTICLE XI. THE ASSEMBLY CHAIRPERSON

SECTION 1. *Assembly Chairperson.* – The OSC shall designate an Assembly Chairperson who shall call the Assembly to order, preside over it, permit delegates to speak in the order in which they have requested leave to speak, and ensure the peaceful and orderly conduct of the Assembly.¹⁰

SECTION 2. *Powers and Duties of the Assembly Chairperson.* – The Assembly Chairperson shall have the following powers and duties:

- a. *Conduct of Assembly.* – The Assembly Chairperson is responsible for conducting and expediting the business of the Assembly, ensuring adherence to this *Guidelines*, maintaining order and decorum.
- b. *Roll Call.* – A roll call of delegates and nominees will be conducted at the beginning of the Assembly to verify attendance and establish a quorum, if practicable.
- c. *Quorum.* – The assembly Chairperson shall certify the presence of a quorum.
- d. *Convene.* – If a quorum is present, the Assembly Chairperson shall call to order the Assembly without delay.
- e. *Adjournment.* – The Assembly Chairperson has the authority to adjourn the Assembly when, in their opinion, the business is completed or if a temporary suspension is needed.
- f. *Referral to the Rules Committee.* – For complex or contentious procedural matters, the Assembly Chairperson may refer the issue to the Rules Committee for review and recommendations. The Rules Committee is responsible for providing guidance on the application of the assembly's rules and procedures.
- g. *Disciplinary Power.* – The Chairperson shall have the authority to summarily remove or deny entry a delegate or non-delegate who violates any of the house rules set forth in this *Guidelines*.¹¹

ARTICLE XII. ORDER OF BUSINESS

SECTION 1. *Order of Business.* – The Assembly shall be conducted as follows:

- a. *Preliminaries.* – Prayers and singing of the Philippine National Anthem and the BARMM Hymn.

¹⁰ Section 5(1) under COMELEC Resolution No. 11166

¹¹ Section 5(2, a-g) under COMELEC Resolution No. 11166

- b. *Roll Call.* – The Assembly Chairperson shall instruct the secretariat to call the roll. He or she shall immediately call the Assembly to order after confirming the presence of a quorum.
- c. *Message of the Assembly Chairperson.* – The Assembly Chairperson shall address the Assembly and acknowledge the delegates present.
- d. *Presentation of Nominees.* – Each nominee shall be called on stage and introduced to the Assembly. The introduction shall be limited to their full name, affiliation, and track record.
- e. *Orientation.* – The Assembly Chairperson shall provide an overview of the Assembly and the manner of voting.
- f. *Voting Proper.* – The voting proper shall commence after the conduct of orientation by the Assembly Chairperson
- g. *Official Announcement of the Results.* – The Results of the Election shall be announced by the Assembly Chairperson.
- h. *Adjournment.* – After the Announcement of the Result, the Assembly shall adjourn upon the banging of the gavel by the Assembly Chairperson.

ARTICLE XIII. ASSEMBLY FORMS AND SUPPLIES

SECTION 1. *Provision of Assembly Forms and Supplies.* – The OSC shall provide the Rules Committee and the Electoral Committee with the ballot boxes, tally sheets, secrecy folder and other supplies necessary for the efficient conduct of the Assembly and voting. The Rules Committee shall cause the printing of the official ballots that will be used in the Assembly.

SECTION 2. *Distribution of Assembly Forms and Supplies.* – The Rules Committee shall release the official ballots to the Electoral Committee at nine o'clock (9:00) in the morning of the Assembly Day. The OSC shall distribute the other election paraphernalia such as the ballot secrecy folder, ballot box, tally sheet, assembly election returns, and supplies to the Electoral Committee.

The Electoral Committee shall thoroughly check the ballots, forms, documents, and supplies. Any issue or discrepancy as to the number of official ballots, shall be reported immediately to the Rules Committee and such incident shall be recorded in the Minutes of the Assembly by the Poll Clerk.

ARTICLE XIV. DOCUMENTATION OF PROCEEDINGS

SECTION 1. *Record of the Minutes of the Assembly.* – The Minutes of the Assembly shall be duly recorded by the Poll Clerk and signed by the Assembly Chairperson and Electoral Committee Chairperson. The OSC shall provide the necessary technical support for the preparation of the Minutes. Copies of the signed Minutes must be distributed to all sectoral organizations within thirty (30) calendar days following the Assembly either physically or electronically.

ARTICLE XV. CONDUCT OF THE ASSEMBLY

SECTION 1. *Preliminaries to Voting.* – The Electoral Committee shall meet at the Voting Area inside the Assembly venue and perform the following preliminary activities:

- a. At nine o'clock (9:00) in the morning of the Assembly Day –
 - i. Receive and check the official ballots, ballot box, secrecy folder and other election supplies
 - ii. Strategically arrange the chairs and tables to be used inside the voting area in such a way that they are at least one (1) meter apart from each other.
 - iii. Set up the segregated waiting areas for men and women.
- b. Before the start of voting, the Electoral Committee shall –
 - i. Receive the ADDL containing the names in alphabetical order of the Settler Organizations with their corresponding delegates who are allowed to vote;
 - ii. Open the ballot box, empty both compartments and show to the public that they are empty. Then the Electoral Committee shall lock its interior cover with one (1) padlock. The Chairperson shall keep the key to the padlock during the voting; and
 - iii. Show to the public, the package of official ballots. Enter in the Minutes the number of pads and the serial numbers of the ballots in each pad, and the fact that the package of ballots was shown to the public.

SECTION 2. *Rules to be Observed During the Voting.* —The following rules shall be observed during the voting:

- a. No member of any citizen's arm shall be allowed to enter the places reserved for the voters and the Electoral Committee, nor mingle and talk with the delegates.
- b. No person carrying any firearm or other deadly weapon shall be allowed within the voting area.
- c. No crowding of delegates and disorderly behavior inside the voting area.
- d. The ballot box shall remain locked until the voting is finished and the counting begins. Except when it becomes necessary to make room for more ballots, the Chairperson, may, in the presence of citizen's arm and Rules Committee, open the box, press down the ballots without removing any of them. After which, the Chairperson shall again close the ballot box and lock it with the padlock. Such facts shall be recorded in the Minutes.

SECTION 3. *Prohibition during the Voting.* — It shall be unlawful for anyone to:

- a. Bring the ballot and/or the ballot secrecy folder outside the voting area;

- b. Speak with anyone while inside the voting area as herein provided;
- c. Fill-up the ballot without using a ballot secrecy folder or exhibit its contents to any person, except in cases of assisted voting. Only members of the Electoral Committee are allowed to assist delegates;
- d. Erase any printing from the ballot or place any distinguishing mark thereon;
- e. Use carbon paper, paraffin paper, or other means of making a copy of the contents of the ballot, or otherwise make use of any other scheme to identify the vote, including the use of digital cameras, cellular phones, or similar gadgets;
- f. Intentionally tear or deface the ballot; and
- g. Disrupt or attempt to disrupt the proceedings of the Electoral Committee.

SECTION 4. *Persons Allowed Inside the Voting Area.* — Only the following shall be allowed inside the voting area:

- a. Electoral Committee members;
- b. Citizen's arm who shall stay only in the space reserved for them;
- c. Delegates casting their votes;
- d. Delegates waiting for their turn to vote; and
- e. Others who are specifically authorized by the Electoral Committee whose presence must be specifically recorded in the Minutes.

SECTION 5. *Authentication of the Ballot.* — In every case, the Chairperson of the Electoral Committee shall, in the presence of the delegate and before giving the ballot to the delegate, authenticate the same by affixing his/her signature at the back thereof.

SECTION 6. *Order of Voting.* — the delegates will vote according to their SO's name arranged in alphabetical order by the Secretariat.

The delegate shall fall in line in the order when the name of the SO is called and cast his/her vote in the same order. The voting area shall be limited to ten (10) delegates at a time. Delegates shall not crowd around the voting area and shall immediately leave after casting their votes.

The Electoral Committee shall give priority to PWDs, Senior Citizens, and heavily pregnant delegates in the casting of votes.

SECTION 7. *Segregated Waiting/Holding Area.* — There shall be ample space for at least twenty (20) persons at one time, accessible to wheelchair users, if available, to be used as holding area. The holding area shall be used by delegates waiting for their turn to vote. The delegates shall sit and arrange themselves in the order that they are called by the Electoral Committee, such that they will vote according to the sequence of their arrival.

SECTION 8. *Manner of Obtaining Ballots and Voting.* – The following shall be observed in obtaining ballots and casting of votes:

- a. The delegate shall approach the Electoral Committee and provide the name of his/her SO or RPPP Sectoral Wing as well as his/her complete name.
- b. The Electoral Committee shall verify if the SO or RPPP Sectoral Wing is found in the ADDL. If so, the delegate shall sign the ADDL and thereafter be issued an Official Ballot, which has been folded crosswise, with the upper portion having greater size in order to show the serial number at the uppermost part. Only the Chairperson shall issue the ballot and only one ballot shall be issued per delegate.
- c. A delegate can vote up to two (2) nominees from the Names of Nominees appearing on the Ballot. The secrecy folder must be used while a delegate is casting his/her vote. After voting, the delegate shall fold the ballot cross-wise in the same manner as it was received, and, in the presence of all the members of the Electoral Committee, return the folded ballot to the Chairperson, without unfolding it, for the latter's verification of the serial number.

SECTION 9. *Procedure After Voting.* – The following procedure shall be observed after the voting:

- a. The Chairperson shall verify whether the ballot returned by the delegate is the same ballot issued to the latter, by comparing the serial number of the ballot that was returned against the serial number of the ballot issued to the said delegate as earlier recorded.
- b. If the serial number of the ballot returned by the delegate is not the same as the serial number of the ballot issued to the delegate, the ballot shall be considered spoiled. The spoiled ballot shall, without being unfolded, and without removing the detachable coupon be distinctly marked with the word "spoiled" and signed by the Chairperson of the Electoral Committee at the back thereof and immediately placed in the compartment for spoiled ballots. The incident shall be recorded in the Minutes.
- c. If the serial number of the ballot that was returned by the delegate is the same as that recorded, the Chairperson shall hand it back to the former for the latter to deposit the folded ballot in the ballot box compartment for valid ballots.
- d. Thereafter, he/she should leave the voting area immediately to give way for the other delegates.

SECTION 10. *Accomplishment of Ballots for Illiterate, Persons with Disabilities, or Senior Citizens.* — In case a delegate is an illiterate, a PWD, or a senior citizen, they may be assisted in the voting by any member of the Electoral Committee. The fact of illiteracy or disability shall be indicated in the Minutes of the Assembly.

SECTION 11. *Close of Voting Process.* — The voting shall be closed after all delegates present shall have casted their votes. The specific time when the voting is closed will be recorded in the Minutes.

SECTION 12. *Counting of Votes.* – The following shall be observed during the counting of votes:

a. *Preliminaries.* — The Electoral Committee shall unlock the ballot box, take out the ballots from the compartment for valid ballots, and proceed to examine the ballots to determine whether there are:

i. *Excess Ballots.* – The Electoral Committee shall, without unfolding the ballots or exposing their contents, count the number of ballots in the compartment for valid ballots, and compare the number of ballots inside the ballot box with the number of voters who voted as reflected in the ADDL. If there are more ballots than there are voters who voted, all the ballots shall be returned to the compartment for valid ballots and thoroughly mixed therein. The Poll Clerk, without seeing the ballots and with his back to the ballot box, shall publicly draw out as many ballots as may be equal to the excess and, without unfolding them, place them in the Envelope for Excess Ballots.

ii. *Marked Ballots.* – The Electoral Committee shall then unfold the ballots and determine whether there are any marked ballots. If any should be found, they shall be placed in an Envelope for Marked Ballots which shall be sealed and signed by the Electoral Committee. The marked ballots shall not be counted.

b. *Manner of Counting of Votes.* – Counting of votes is done by the Chairperson of the Electoral Committee. The counting of votes shall be public without interruption or delay until completed and shall proceed as follows:

i. The Electoral Committee shall open the ballot box, take out the ballots, and without unfolding them or exposing their contents except so far as to ascertain that each ballot is single, compare the number of ballots in the ballot box with the number of voters who voted as recorded in the Minutes.

ii. The Chairperson shall take the ballots of the first pile and read the ballots one by one; while the Poll Clerk and a third member of the Electoral Committee shall record on the printed tally sheet.

Each vote shall be recorded by a vertical line (*tara*), except every fifth vote, which shall be recorded by a diagonal line crossing the previous four vertical lines.

After all the ballots for the Assembly have been counted, the Electoral Committee shall:

1. Prepare the Assembly Electoral Returns based on the final result of the tally sheet;
2. Sign and affix their thumb marks on the certification portion printed at the bottom of the tally sheet; and
3. Place the counted ballots in the special envelope provided for the purpose, the electoral committee shall close the envelope with a paper seal, and sign and deposit the same in the compartment for

valid ballots. The accomplished tally sheet, certified by the Electoral Committee, shall also be deposited in the compartment for valid ballots.

- c. *Assembly Election Returns and Distribution of Copies Thereof.* – The Electoral Committee shall prepare the returns after the counting of votes. The returns shall be prepared in five (5) copies. All the members of the Electoral Committee shall sign the certification printed at the bottom of the returns and affix their respective thumb marks on the space provided.

Upon completion of the returns, each copy shall be placed in a separate special envelope provided for the purpose, and be immediately distributed to the following:

- i. One (1) original copy to the BEO through the Electoral Committee;
- ii. One (1) original copy to the Office of the Chief Minister;
- iii. One (1) original copy to the COMELEC Accredited Citizens Arms;
- iv. One (1) original copy to the Rules Committee; and
- v. One (1) original copy to the OSC.

A photocopy of the Assembly Election Returns shall also be given to an SO or RPPP Sectoral Wing who has fielded a nominee.

SECTION 13. *Announcement of Results.* – Upon completion of the returns, the Chairperson of the Electoral Committee shall officially announce the results of the voting by reading the total number of votes obtained by each nominee.

SECTION 14. *Disposition of Ballot Boxes, Keys, Returns, and Other Documents.* – Upon the termination of the counting of votes and the announcement of results in the assembly, the Electoral Committee shall:

- a. Place the following documents inside the compartment of the ballot box for valid ballots:
 - i. Envelopes containing:
 1. Counted official ballots;
 2. Excess/marked/spoiled and one-half of torn unused official ballots;
 3. Returns (copy for the ballot box); and
 4. Minutes of the Assembly (copy for the ballot box);
 - ii. Tally Sheet; and
 - iii. Stubs of used official ballots.
- b. Close the interior covers of the ballot box and seal it with a plastic security seal, lock the outer cover of the ballot box with the one (1) padlock, and seal it with a plastic security seal.

- c. The keys to the padlock shall be placed in a separate envelope which shall be sealed and signed by all members of the Electoral Committee and submitted to the chairperson.
- d. Deliver to the OSC the following:
 - i. The ADDL;
 - ii. Certified minutes of the Assembly;
 - iii. Envelope containing the returns copy;
 - iv. Envelope containing the keys to the ballot box; and
 - v. Envelope containing the other half of torn unused ballots.

SECTION 15. *Proclamation of Sectoral Representatives.* – The two (2) elected sectoral representatives **for the settler communities** shall be proclaimed simultaneously with other elected Members of the Parliament in October 2025.¹²

SECTION 16. *Certificate of Election.* – Immediately after the conclusion of the election process, the Electoral Committee shall prepare and sign a Certificate of Election indicating the name of the two (2) elected nominees as sectoral representatives for the settler communities sector, as well as the date and venue of the assembly. The Certificate shall be signed by the Chairperson, Poll Clerk, and the third member of the Electoral Committee, with the minutes of the assembly attached, and shall be transmitted to the Commission through the BEO within twenty-four (24) hours from the close of the election process, and in no case later than seven (7) calendar days from the conduct of the Bangsamoro Parliamentary Elections for Party Representatives and District Representatives, unless a different period is prescribed by the Commission.¹³

ARTICLE XVI. POST ELECTION ACTIVITIES

SECTION 1. *Recording in Minutes of Challenges, Disputes, and Oppositions.* — The Poll Clerk must record in the Minutes all challenges, oaths taken, and the resolutions of the electoral committee on each case. The Poll Clerk shall certify that the Minutes contain all challenges, oaths, and resolutions made.

SECTION 2. *Opposition/Dispute.* — Any opposition/dispute as to the registration of delegates, composition and qualification of the Electoral Committee and Secretariat, manner of election of sectoral representatives, and counting of votes during the Assembly shall be filed with the Rules Committee, within seven (7) calendar days from the date of assembly.

¹² *Third paragraph under Section 6 of COMELEC Resolution No. 11166, with OSC's amendment to the number of elected sectoral representatives for settler communities from one (1) to two (2)*

¹³ *Fourth paragraph under Section 6 of COMELEC Resolution No. 11166*

Any opposition to the qualifications of the nominees shall be filed with the Rules Committee, within seven (7) calendar days from the date of publication of the list of nominees by the OSC.

Any dispute, **not raised before the Electoral Committee**, arising from the election process must be submitted in writing to the OSC within twenty-four (24) hours after the announcement of results.¹⁴

The OSC, **upon consideration of the recommendation of the Electoral Committee**, shall resolve disputes within three (3) calendar days **from receipt thereof**. The OSC decision shall be final.¹⁵

ARTICLE XVII. FINAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. *Separability Clause*. – If for any reason, any provision of this *Guidelines* is declared null and void or unconstitutional, the other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 2. *Effectivity and Publication*. – This *Guidelines* shall take effect after three (3) calendar days following its publication in the *Bangsamoro Gazette* and in any newspaper of general or regional circulations in the Philippines.

This *Guidelines* is issued by the Office for Settler Communities this 4th day of September, 2025, in Cotabato City, BARMM, Philippines.



DR. SUSANA SALVADOR ANAYATIN
Member of the Parliament, Bangsamoro Transition Authority
Executive Director, Office for Settler Communities

¹⁴ *Second paragraph (a) under Section 6 of COMELEC Resolution No. 11166*

¹⁵ *Second paragraph (b) under Section 6 of COMELEC Resolution No. 11166*