



NATIONAL CITIZENS' MOVEMENT FOR FREE ELECTIONS (NAMFREL)

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PRESS RELEASE

NAMFREL Bantay ng Bayan UPDATE #2

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NAMFREL releases update on its observations on the conduct of the Cavite District 7 Special Election for District Representative

The National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) released a second update on its observations on the conduct of the February 25, 2023 Special Election in Cavite District 7 for District Representative. District 7 of Cavite Province is composed of the municipalities of Amadeo, Indang, and Tanza, and the city of Trece Martires. NAMFREL has been accredited by the COMELEC as citizens' arm for the special election, and for this electoral exercise, NAMFREL has deployed observation teams to observe election day processes. The second update covers the closing and counting processes observed in the polling places. Observations are contained in observation forms that are being sent in electronically by NAMFREL's observation teams in Cavite to NAMFREL's headquarters in Mandaluyong City.

In general, NAMFREL observers described the conduct of the closing and counting processes as smooth and peaceful, and members of the electoral boards (EBs) appeared well-trained and knowledgeable of the automated process.

In the majority of polling places where NAMFREL observers followed the closing and counting processes, the vote counting machines functioned normally. However, VCMs stopped operating during the printing of audit logs in at least two polling places observed, but NAMFREL believes these did not compromise the results in said polling places.

Observers noted that some members of EBs appeared frustrated during the closing process because the scissors provided were not big enough to cut the unused ballots, and the envelopes provided to them for the unused ballots were too small.

Voter turnout appears to be around 50% in the polling places observed. A more official figure on voter turnout will come from the Comelec during canvassing.

As of writing, results from the different polling places have started arriving at the respective canvassing centers in Amadeo, Indang, Tanza, and Trece Martires. In Indang, a NAMFREL observer noted that some of the ballot boxes being submitted to the municipal treasurer's office have not been properly sealed.

NAMFREL will continue to follow the canvassing process: municipal canvassing will be held tonight after the closing of polls and printing of election returns at the polling places, and provincial canvassing will be conducted tomorrow, February 26, starting at 8am, as announced by the Comelec earlier tonight. Unlike in the 2022 automated

national and local elections when polling place results were transmitted electronically during canvassing, for the Cavite special election, results contained in SD cards to be taken out of the vote counting machines will be delivered by the electoral boards (EBs) to their respective city/municipal canvassing centers. The respective boards of canvassers will receive the SD cards from the clustered polling precincts and the CP results will be consolidated. The results of the consolidation at the city/municipal level will be stored in CDs and transported to the Provincial Board of Canvassers (PBOC) in Trece Martires City where the Reception and Custody Group will receive the CDs. Canvassing by the PBOC will start at 8am tomorrow, February 26, 2023 and is projected to be completed before 10am. The COMELEC will then proclaim the winner of the election at around 10am.

NAMFREL will be submitting a final report to the COMELEC on the findings of the observation, identifying areas that could be further strengthened, and recommending measures to help ensure the conduct of safer and more efficient electoral exercises.

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