



NATIONAL CITIZENS' MOVEMENT FOR FREE ELECTIONS (NAMFREL)

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NAMFREL SUPPORTS CALL OF I.T. PROFESSIONALS FOR PARALLEL RUN

The National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) supports calls by Philippine information technology professionals for a manual parallel run of all ballots, counting only three positions of President, Vice President, and one local government official (e.g., Mayor), as a means of cross-checking and validating the accuracy the of the PCOS machines. This parallel run is not meant to replace the Automated Election System and the PCOS machines but rather to crosscheck that automated and manual counts are the same. If fewer than eight errors are spotted for the count of the three positions, that will mean that the machines have less than one percent random errors and that the automated counts can proceed. However, if more than eight errors occur for those three positions, that would be an indication that additional errors may exist in other positions which would warrant a full manual recounting of ballots for that particular precinct before data transmission takes place.

This form of validation or parallel run is common practice for all companies rolling out large-scale automation processes for the first time, according to NAMFREL Chairman Jose L. Cuisia. Since COMELEC was unable to undertake a full end-to-end trial run of the system, the parallel or validation run would demonstrate to the public the effectiveness of the machines and help create greater acceptance of the results and increased the credibility of the electoral exercise.

Philippine IT professionals have estimated that the parallel run would last some three to five hours, according to time and motion studies, and could be carried out by the Boards of Elections Officers (BEIs). They have also estimated that the additional costs of the validation run would be around P500 million, mostly for funding overtime pay of BEI with some portions of this budget to be allocated to the printing of additional forms for the COMELEC. Since the COMELEC is already printing manual forms for 30% of all precincts as a back-up, the IT professionals have recommended printing forms for all precincts for the parallel run.

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