



News Release

November 8th 2015

High Voter Turnout and Level of Confidence on the Fairness and Freeness of the 2015 General Elections

YANGON – A survey carried out between 14th and 31st October 2015, found that the 2015 general elections will see a big voter turnout. When asked ‘do you plan to vote in the 2015 general elections’, a total of 81 percent of the respondents said that they are very likely to vote, a figure likely to reflect the expected voter turnout as Myanmar citizens go to the polls on 8 November.

Probed further by the survey, the respondents identified the following reasons behind their motivations to perform their voting rights on Sunday; to perform civic duty (30 percent), to make a difference (27 percent), bandwagon effect (everyone is going to vote and so do I) (16 percent), to choose a new government (12 percent), to exercise their democratic rights (2 percent), was told to vote by their family members (1 percent) and to end corruption (1 percent).

Based on these findings, it is estimated that the voter turnout on November 8th will be around 81 to 85 percent.

Conduct of Elections

Despite numerous criticisms against the 2015 general elections, a huge majority of the respondents believe that the 2015 elections will be freer and fairer than the 2010 general elections. The survey found that only 34 percent of the respondents think that the 2010 elections was free and fair but the level of confidence on the 2015 elections increased significantly to 66 percent. The level of confidence is significantly higher (72 percent) within the ethnic states as compared to the region (63 percent). This is similar to an earlier survey conducted in June 2014 by the Asia Foundation which found 68% of respondents expecting this general election to be free and fair.

In parallel with the high confidence level on the conduct of the 2015 elections, more than three-fourths of the respondents (77 percent) said that the Union Election Commission (UEC) was doing a good job in ensuring the freeness and fairness of the elections. There

is a slight difference in the perception towards the UEC between the ethnic states and the region where the respondents within the region have higher approval rating (78 percent) as compared to respondents in the ethnic states (72 percent).

Despite the high confidence level in the conduct of the 2015 general elections process, about two thirds (65 percent) of the respondents expressed their concerns with the voters list which can be observed across all demographic variables. Still, the level of confidence on the secrecy of the ballot was very high at 71 percent.

The survey was commissioned by a consortium led by Mizzima Media Group while Merdeka Center for Opinion Research (Malaysia) acted as the technical advisor. 1,200 adult Myanmar citizens were sampled as respondents via face-to-face interviews. Respondents were selected on multi-stage random sampling. The interviews were administrated in Burmese while interpreters assisted in ethnic minority areas. The survey covered the whole of Myanmar except for Chin state flooding prevented interviews from taking place. The survey is weighted to reflect the national population.

About Mizzima

Mizzima was the first exile media to move back inside Myanmar in January 2012, after the country opened up for democratic changes. Mizzima Media Co. Ltd. produces daily newspaper in Myanmar, a weekly business magazine in English, television programs on business, sports, women and entertainment and websites in both Myanmar (www.mizzimaburmese.com) and English (www.mizzima.com). Additionally, Mizzima media products such as SMS, Radio News, Video News and Images are also available on various digital platforms and mobile phones in Myanmar. Mizzima also prides itself on our active cooperation with other national and international stakeholders in the media reform process in Myanmar.

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About Merdeka Center for Opinion Research

Merdeka Center for Opinion Research was formally established in 2001 as an independent organization focused on public opinion research and socio-economic analysis. Merdeka's mission is to act as a bridge between ordinary Malaysians and other stakeholders with the leading members of the nation – by collecting public opinion studies and expressing them through survey results, analysis and position papers. For details, visit: www.merdeka.org

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