**PERSONAL SECURITY DURING ELECTIONS GUIDANCE**

All over the world, election periods are known to be a really important time. This is because of the several activities that go on before, during and after these times.

This guide offers some personal safety and security tips. Obviously, the relevance of each these depend on the country and culture.

**20 Best Security Tips for Staying Safe During Elections**

**1. Do Not Argue About Politics in Public**

If you belong to a particular political party and there is an argument about another political party, then it is important that you do not join in. This is so that you do not become a part of any escalation in argument that may involve arguments or arrest.

**2. Always Get Back On Time**

The election period in various countries of the world, may be a time for violence to develop; therefore, it is appropriate that you do not stay out late. As a matter of fact, it is often best to get home early. Park your vehicle in secure areas, preferably within the walls of your compound and well away from the main roads or protest march routes.

**3. Avoid Criticizing Any Politician**

Do not attempt to criticize any politician of the opposition party in your country in public. This is because if you do, you might be stepping on the toes of people who may want to be harmful and target people/organisations to make a political point.

**4. Do not Support or Wear Political Campaign Uniforms in Public**

If you belong to any political party, it may be better that you do not wear political party uniforms. This is so that you do not attract the attention of opposition party members who may be irritated by it. In some cases, be mindful that these party members may be all out to injure others.

**5. Don’t Keep Late Night**

It is very important that during an election period, you wrap up all you have to do in the office before nightfall. As a matter of fact, many organisations require that their workers return home by nightfall. Know at least 2 routes to your office and back to your home. You can confirm the safety of routes via updates and reports through local media sources.

**6. Always Listen to the News – Always**

One of the ways to be security conscious during election time is to always stay abreast with issues. One of the ways to comfortably do this is by listening to the news.

**7. Don’t Disclose Who You Will Vote For at the Polls**

During election period, people have different Candidates they pledge allegiance to. Some of them go as far as picking up a fight with those who aren’t in the same camp with them. Therefore, it would do you well not to disclose whom you plan to vote for.

**8. After You Have Cast Your Vote Go Straight to Your Home**

One of the ways to stay secure during elections is by returning home after casting your vote. Staying back or loitering with other supporters after casting your vote may be detrimental to your personal safety. In the case of civil unrest, keep yourself and your family indoors at all times and keep your homes locked down. Ensure that all windows and doors are secure.

**9. Don’t Move About With Huge Cash**

If you have plans to move around with a huge amount of cash during elections, then you should consider having a re-think, as this is no time to do such. Miscreants take advantage of the period to rob people off their valuables. Make sure you withdraw enough cash ahead of time to keep in-hand in case there’s no working cash-point near you, so you have 1 less reason to go outside your house if there are mounting tensions.

**10. When Driving, Ensure That Your Car Central Lock is activated**

Do not drive without making sure that your car central lock is activated. This is so that you know that you are safe inside, rather than unsafe.

**11. Steer Clear of Undefined Crowd or Groups of People**

It is very important that you do not associate yourself with undefined crowds or groups of people who enjoy analyzing political issues and candidates in public.

**12. If You Must Hang out with Friends, Ensure that it is Safe to Do So**

Should you want to hang out with friends, then you must really be sure that you do this in a very secure area. It has to be in a non-violent area, or an area that is less prone to violence.

**13. Don’t Move About With Expensive Gadgets (Mobile Device)**

You would be doing yourself a world of good, if you do not move around with expensive gadgets. This is so that you do not run into criminals who may want to rob you of them.

**14. Minimize Your Family Outings during Elections Periods**

It is important that you minimize your Family Outings during election. This is because of the pockets of troubles which may ensue, and which makes your family vulnerable to any attack.

**15. Stock up Your Home with Food and the Basics**

The election period is a period that enforces the stay at home order. Therefore, it is vital to store up the house with all the food stuff and ingredients that is needed so as to avoid incessant outings to the markets and malls. Stock up on food and water (at least 1 week’s supply) in case the local markets and stores aren’t open or you can’t go out. Prioritize non-perishable food like those stored in cans over fresh food that takes time to cook and requires freezing (in case the power in your area is cut off). Stock up on enough fuel for your generator in case there’s no electricity. Also make sure there’s a full-tank of fuel in all of your vehicles (remember to store these larger quantities safely too!). Ensure you stock up on equipment such as flashlights, batteries, candles, medical supplies (e.g. First Aid Boxes), recharge cards (or add sufficient credit to your phone), etc.

**16. Have Your Doctor’s Number and Emergency Services Handy**

If you do not have a medical person’s details handy, then you may want to know that you need to do this. This is so that you can call whenever you need a medical advice during election. Check you have ready access to your local Medical Emergency Services and Fire Services also.

**17. Do Not Talk Recklessly At the Polls**

To be safe; it is strongly inadvisable that you do not talk recklessly at the polling unit about any candidate or the election process. Doing this may attract some grave consequences.

**18. Celebrate in a Civil Manner**

If after the elections your candidate wins, then it is important that you celebrate in a civil manner. It is no time to begin to paint the town red in a lavish style. Remember, that some folks who are in support of the opposition may not be too happy.

**19. Use the “buddy system”**

If moving in and around trouble spots is unavoidable, consider travelling with a colleague or friend. Females should consider requesting a male chaperone as a gender related personal security measure. Miscreants take advantage of the period for their own misguided reasons.

**20. Exercise your democratic right to demonstrate – but avoid participating in violent protests.**

This is not only a matter of personal morality, but personal safety also.

**There are never any guarantees, but consideration of some of these tips will contribute towards your personal safety and security.**

***Finally, make sure all your family members (especially those living with you) know the numbers to call in case of any emergency. Discuss with them about what to do in case of an emergency or in case you get separated for any reason. Be mindful of the particular needs of children and the elderly since they deserve special consideration.***