

**Baltimore Association of Nepalese (BANA)
Election Committee 2025**

2025 Election Code of Conduct

EC.2025.01. Overview and adoption

This Code of Conduct is intended to guarantee the free and fair election of BANA Executive Committee for 2025-2028 Term and uphold the sanctity of the election by ensuring the right of each voter to practice his/her franchise without intimidation and counting of each valid vote. This Code of Conduct, revised and updated by the BANA Election Committee 2025, supersedes the 2022 version. It was adopted unanimously during the fifteenth meeting held on February 19, 2025. Going forward, all BANA members and individuals involved in the 2025 election are required to abide by its provisions.

EC.2025.02. General

- 02.01. All concerning individuals or groups including the BANA Executive Committee, Board of Trustee, Election Committee, candidates, voters, election volunteers, and members of the community (hereafter mentioned as parties, whether it is a single individual or a team) will play their respective roles in creating and maintaining an environment conducive to conducting the free and fair election.
- 02.02. All parties concerned must be obligated by the relevant provisions of this Code of Conduct, recognize the authority of the Election Committee, allow the election officials to perform their duties, and accept the result of the election.
- 02.03. In case of any concerns or questions regarding the election, all concerning parties shall correspond with the Election Committee through election@banaonline.org. No one shall contact any election committee member through personal phone or email or any social site.
- 02.04. Only official correspondences of the Election Committee will be authentic. Any other verbal or written correspondence with (or of) a member of the Committee will not be recognized as an authentic correspondence of the Committee.
- 02.05. No one, by any means, shall force any member of the Election Committee for any information or decision or anything related to the election.
- 02.06. All election programs/activities will be conducted as per the Election Program/Timeline determined by the Committee and posted on <https://banaonline.org/election-2025/election-programs-timeline-2025/>.
- 02.07. On the election date, only representatives or agents of candidates who have been authorized in advance by the Election Committee, after completing the required orientation, will be permitted to remain at the designated locations within the polling or counting stations to perform their assigned duties. No other individuals shall be allowed within the boundaries or marked areas, as

determined by the Election Committee, at the premises of the polling or counting stations. Voters will only be permitted to remain within the premises for the purpose of casting their vote.

- 02.08. All parties shall respect security personnel to help them execute their duties to ensure a safe, secure, and conducive environment in the polling or counting station.
- 02.09. No one shall interrupt or harass, by any means, the Election Committee or any member of the Election Committee or any election official or volunteer.
- 02.10. Every voter has a right to cast vote for a preferred candidate secretly in a safe and fair environment without fear and intimidation. No one shall force, in any way, a voter to vote or not vote for a candidate or tell or show a proof of who he/she voted for. With an intent to protect a voter from being compelled to take a picture of his ballot as a proof, using mobile phones or cameras into the polling station will be prohibited.
- 02.11. To maintain a conducive environment, campaigning for or against a candidate by anyone, using any means, in the premises of the voting station as designated by the Election Committee will be prohibited.
- 02.12. Any kind of chanting in the premises of polling and counting stations will be prohibited. Speaking loudly or scolding election committee members, election volunteers, or security officers will be prohibited as well. Anyone violating this provision will be handed to the security personnel.
- 02.13. No one other than the voters or individuals authorized by the Election Committee will be allowed to stay in the premises of the polling or counting station. However, small kids can stay with their parents while the parents are in the process of casting their vote.
- 02.14. In addition to the restrictions on mobile phones outlined in Section 02.10, the carrying of any liquids or fire-producing devices into the polling or counting stations is prohibited.
- 02.15. Only ballot papers issued by the Election Committee, duly signed by a designated election officer, and handed at the polling station to the prospective voters, will be considered a legitimate ballot paper. Votes cast on the paper other than the legitimate ballot paper will not be counted.
- 02.16. To obtain a valid ballot at the polling station, each prospective voter must present an original, valid physical Maryland ID or driver's license to the designated election officers for verification against the voter list, ensuring that the name matches the published record. If deemed necessary, the election officer may also perform additional cross-verification using other information from the Election Committee's records, as provided in the membership form.
- 02.17. If deemed necessary or useful, the Election Committee can nominate any individuals or organizations to observe the election and issue them individual passes. Individuals carrying such passes will be allowed to enter the election or counting stations just to observe the election. They must not interrupt the election or counting process in any way, and they must not, in any way, conduct any activity for or against any candidate. If the election committee perceives violation of this provision by any such observer, the committee will immediately relieve the person from the position of the observer and force him/her out of the station premises.

- 02.18. If violation of this code of conduct by anyone is evident, the Election Committee can take disciplinary actions as appropriate. The disciplinary action includes (but not limited to) a formal warning, termination of candidacy (if the violator is a candidate), termination of the election responsibility (volunteer, polling/counting agent, etc.), and/or cancellation of voting right, and/or handing over to security. The disciplinary action taken by the Election Committee shall be final and mandatory. All shall be abided by the decision of the Election Committee or challenge the decision through due legal process.
- 02.19. The current BANA executive Committee shall provide all logistic supports to the Election Committee in a timely manner or when needed and cooperate with the Committee for all activities including implementing the decision of the Committee.
- 02.20. Election experts, officers, or volunteers appointed by the Election Committee and assigned specific duties will be under the supervision of the Chair of the Election Committee or a member nominated by the Chair. If any volunteer does not adhere to this provision, they may be relieved of their duties and asked to leave the voting or counting station.

EC.2025.03. Election Committee

- 03.01. A member of the Election Committee (hereafter mentioned as a member) shall maintain, observe, and enforce the high standards of conduct so that the integrity, independence, and fairness of the election is ensured.
- 03.02. A member shall perform all duties diligently with honesty and without fear or favor to guarantee impartiality and fairness in the election.
- 03.03. A member shall not make public comments or get involved in any debate or express any personal opinion for or against any candidate and on the merits of any election matter that is under the consideration of the Election Committee.
- 03.04. A member shall not make any comments or opinions in the public against any procedure or decision of the Election Committee through any means including email or social media. It is the duty of a member to defend the decision of the EC.
- 03.05. A member should practice civility by being patient, dignified, respectful, and courteous, in dealings with all stakeholders including his/her colleagues in the Election Committee, BANA officers, voters, and candidates.
- 03.06. A member shall maintain confidentiality on the matters of the Election Committee and will not publicly disclose any confidential information, issues under consideration of the Committee, and any opinion expressed by any member in an Election Committee meeting on any issues.
- 03.07. A member shall not conduct any election campaign or make any contribution for or against a candidate including asking anyone to file or not file candidacy and requesting any voter to vote or not vote for a particular candidate or a team of candidates.

- 03.08. A member shall not participate in any election-related meetings (physical or online) other than Election Committee meetings or meetings called by BANA executive committee where Election Committee is invited.
- 03.09. A member shall refrain from any activities or behaviors that may pose threats to the integrity and fairness of the election.
- 03.10. A member of the election committee, who has been involved in any task of the election in the capacity of the Election Committee Member, or has remained in that capacity for any duration, cannot file candidacy for himself or second a candidacy of anyone else or become a campaign member of any candidate(s) even after resigning from the Election Committee.
- 03.11. The Election Committee has appointed the Chair as its official spokesperson. Therefore, only the Chair is authorized to speak on behalf of the Election Committee or issue statements to the public or media concerning any aspect of the election procedure, updates, or related information.

EC.2025.04. Candidates and Their Representatives or Agents

- 04.01. Must support the Election Committee's effort to conduct the fair and impartial election and cooperate with the Election Committee and its members.
- 04.02. Must recognize the authority of the Election Committee, allow the Committee members or other election workers nominated by the Committee to perform their duties, accept the decision(s) of the Election Committee or their representative, and accept the result of the election. A candidate can dispute in writing to the Election Committee for any election activities or results including counting of votes. Upon receiving such a dispute, the Election Committee will review the written dispute and make a decision, which will be a final decision. No other review or investigation or decision will be made after the final decision. Candidate(s) must accept the decision(s) of the Election Committee or challenge the decision(s) by due process of law.
- 04.03. Must agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct. The Election Committee reserves the right to impose disciplinary actions as deemed appropriate, including the cancellation of candidacy, in the event of a violation of this Code by a candidate. If a candidate's representative or agent violates the Code of Conduct, the individual may be relieved of their assigned duties and privileges and removed from the premises.
- 04.04. Must use language which provoke violence or discrimination (based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender, class or religion), publish false or defamatory allegations about other candidate(s), abuse position of power or privilege (if any) by himself/herself or through others, or influence any stakeholders through any undue means to affect the outcome of the election.
- 04.05. Must not use violence or threat or illegal pressure to force a voter to vote or refrain from voting for a candidate.

- 04.06. Must not force a voter to disclose the identity of the candidate he/she has voted for or take reprisals against a voter on account of the way in which he or she has voted or is believed to have voted.
- 04.07. Must not force, intimidate, or use any means to influence Election Committee member(s) to affect the procedure(s), action(s), and/or decision(s) of the Election Committee.
- 04.08. Must not encourage or assist a person who is not an eligible voter or who has already voted on his behalf, to vote using another voter's credentials.
- 04.09. Must not disrupt the work of election officials at a polling or counting station. In the event that a representative or agent of a candidate disrupts the election process, disregards the instructions of the designated election officer, or causes disturbances during voter verification or vote counting, the designated election officer at the polling or counting station is authorized to impose disciplinary measures through a "yellow and red card" system. Upon the first infraction, the individual will receive a yellow card as an initial warning, and a record of the violation will be documented. A subsequent violation will result in the issuance of a second yellow card, which will be recorded as an additional warning. In the event of a third violation, the individual will be issued a red card and will be immediately removed from his/her duties and the election premises. Once a red card is issued, no replacement will be permitted for that representative or agent by the candidate. This system is designed to preserve the integrity, order, and fairness of the election process, ensuring that all actions are conducted in a manner consistent with the established protocols
- 04.10. Must not campaign or distribute or display campaign materials in the polling station premises restricted by the Election Committee.
- 04.11. Must not disturb the voters in the line inside the designated boundary by the election committee. Must not take pictures of the election materials including the marked up voter lists at the voter verification desks.
- 04.12. Must comply with this Code and any other applicable provisions or codes. Any candidate(s) or his/her supporters or representatives must not disrupt any disciplinary action(s) against himself, his representative(s), or his supporter(s) by the Election Committee for violating this code.
- 04.13. Must co-operate with election officials to guarantee peaceful and fair polling and ensure that voters are completely free to cast their votes without being subject to any undue pressure including intimidation, annoyance, or disturbance.
- 04.14. Must not carry or display any weapons at any places or activities related to the election. Any candidate or candidate's representative or agent found in violation of this provision will be required to leave the premises and may be handed over to security. Disciplinary actions, including cancellation of candidacy, may also be imposed.
- 04.15. Must not consume alcohol or be under the influence of alcohol or any intoxicating substance during any election-related activities and places, including meetings, polling stations, counting

stations, or event/program venues. Any candidate or candidate's representative or agent found in violation of this provision will be required to leave the premises and may be handed over to security. Disciplinary actions, including the cancellation of candidacy, may also be imposed.

EC.2025.05. Formulation of policies or guidelines

If deemed necessary by the Election Committee, the Committee may establish policies and guidelines to ensure the election is conducted in a free, fair, and impartial manner.

EC.2025.06. Amendment

If deemed necessary by the Election Committee, the Committee can make necessary amendments to this Code.

EC.2025.07. Date of Effectiveness

This Code was adopted anonymously by the Election Committee during a meeting held on 02/19/2025 and published online thereafter, becoming effective at 12:00 AM on 02/20/2025. It shall remain in effect until the completion of the election, including the oath-taking and handover ceremony.

BANA Election Committee 2025

Dr. Krishna Dhakal, Chair
Dr. Manoj Shrestha, Member
Mr. Kiran Pantha, Member
Ms. Shushila Mahat, Member
Mr. Ram Krishna Bhattarai, Member
Mrs. Kamala Bhusal, Member
Mr. Dinesh Gurung, Member