

Date: 12/24/21

Press Release - NST Election Committee and Membership Committee

NST Election Committee and Membership Committee were approached by few candidates and voters regarding possible misuse of voters' phone numbers. Some of their friends and families received election related text messages.

This issue was raised by few candidates in meeting between candidates and Election & Membership committees on 12/22/2021.

On 12/24/2021 Membership committee organized a meeting to discuss this issue. In addition to Election Committee and Membership committee, NST IT coordinator and current NST president were also present in the meeting. Following are the attendees:

1. Bijay Bhattraï – Membership Committee
2. Krishna Lamichhane - Membership Committee
3. Gyanendra Karki - Membership Committee
4. Padam Bhandari - Membership Committee
5. Dinesh Sharma – Current NST President
6. Prayas Bastola – NST IT Coordinator
7. Bhim Karki – Election Committee

During the meeting it was established that NST IT coordinator was only who has access to voters' full data that were captured during the membership registration. Membership and Election Committees have access to limited data such as names, last 4 digits of ID, Street address, City and zip code, phone numbers were not provided, and not released anywhere. NST IT coordinator strongly stated that voters' phone numbers have not been shared with anybody.

Upon further deliberation it was determined that phone numbers are public record, simple paid internet search will reveal phone numbers, as they are part of public records.

In order to resolve the issue amicably, we asked the complainants to provide more information. We received screenshots of conversation between the source of texts to the recipient of the texts. This only proves that texts were sent. We will need credible evidence of sharing of phone numbers, if it was shared, to the source of the texts. We request all concerned parties to submit such evidence to prempuga@gmail.com and bijay.nst@gmail.com. Once we have credible evidence, it will allow us to conduct a thorough investigation.

Election is a democratic process, and everyone has the right to express their opinion. However, we urge all to refrain from spreading false or misguided information about any community members or NST committees. Please note that election code of conduct and other rules may make such act punishable by law.

Election and Membership committees and all NST stakeholders are committed to conduct free, fair and transparent elections, we like to request all voters' and candidates' cooperation in this regard.

Signed

Election Committee

Prem Adhikari

Basu Bhandari

Nanda Regmi

Bhim Karki

Mahesh Nepal

Membership Committee

Bijay Bhattra

Krishna Lamichanne

Gyanendra Karki

Padam Bhandari

NST

Dinesh Sharma, President

Prayas Bastola, IT Coordinator