



WILDLIFE FIRST

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MOST URGENT

25/03/2014

The Chief Electoral Officer,
Karnataka Nirvachana Nilaya, Maharani's College Circle,
Sheshadri Road, Bangalore – 560001.

Sir,

Sub: Exemption of staff and vehicles of National Parks, Sanctuaries & Tiger Reserves from election duties during the upcoming Parliamentary Elections.

**Ref: 1. D0. No. 49/CEC/99/132 of the Chief Election Commissioner of India
2. Order No. 437/6/98-PLN-III dated 30th January, 1998**

You may be aware that the Election Commission of India has repeatedly issued orders exempting vehicles and staff of National Parks, Sanctuaries and Tiger Reserves across the country from election duties. A copy of the said order issued in 2009 is enclosed for your immediate reference.

It is also learnt that the Chief Election Commissioner has directed that this policy decision of the Commission must be in the Policy file, and circulated to all CEOs in the country.

This important decision of the Election Commission is based on the fact that tigers and other endangered species are under serious threat from hunting by organized criminal networks. The forest department needs to continuously carry out patrolling and maintain anti-poaching camps in the inaccessible interior forest areas. Any withdrawal of staff and/or patrolling vehicles would weaken the already stretched protection infrastructure and deplete field formations. Furthermore, during this season, forests need to be protected from arsonists who set fire and destroy wildlife habitat.

In view of the existing Order of the Election Commission, we request you, in public interest, to kindly issue necessary instructions to exempt vehicles and staff of National Parks, Sanctuaries and Tiger Reserves from being requisitioned for election duties during the upcoming Parliamentary Elections in April 2014.

Thank you for your kind consideration

Sincerely

Praveen Bhargav
Managing Trustee
Former Member, National Board for Wildlife

Copy: Shri. Madan Gopal IAS, Add.Chief Secretary - Forests, Karnataka
Shri Vinay Luthra IFS, PCCF & Chief Wildlife Warden

Election Commission of India

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

No. 437/6/2001-PLN III

Dated: 9th March 2009

To

1. The Chief Secretaries of All States and Union Territories
2. The Chief Electoral Officers of all States and Union Territories

Subject: Vehicles and Staff of Wild Life Sanctuaries, National Sanctuaries and National Games Parks-not to be requisitioned for election duty.

Sir

I am directed to invite your attention to the Commission's letter No. 437/6/98-PLN-III dated 30th January 1998 on the subject mentioned above exempting vehicles and staff of Wild Life Sanctuaries, National Sanctuaries and National Games Parks from Election duties. These instructions were repeated during the General Election to Lok Sabha held in 1999 and General Elections held to certain Legislative Assemblies in 2000.

The Commission once again emphasises that vehicles and staff of Wild Life Sanctuaries, National Sanctuaries, National Games Parks in your state should not be requisitioned for election duty. They will be exempted to protect India's diminishing wildlife values.

Kindly ensure that this direction is strictly followed and intimated to all the sanctuaries and parks under your control. These instructions are to be treated as Standing Instructions of the Commission and will apply to all future election.

Yours faithfully

Sd/-

Sharan Pal Singh

Copy to the Forest Secretaries to the State Governments for information and necessary action.

Sd/-

(Sharan Pal Singh)