



ELECTIONS 2016

Weekly Overview

September 19-25



International Center for Civic Culture considers important to periodically summarize political processes ongoing in Georgia during pre-election period. For this purpose, our organization is observing pre-election activities of political parties, governmental and non-governmental sector and presents its weekly review.

International Center for Civic Culture
(ICCC)

#20A Bako Street
Tbilisi
0112
Georgia
info@iccc.org.ge
+995 (32) 940296

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Georgian Dream accuses National Movement of provocation

September 19

According to Georgian Dream Executive Secretary Irakli Kobakhidze, armed National Movement activists entered their majoritarian candidate Levan Gogichaishvili's office and tried to stage a provocation yesterday. He said the Georgian Dream members called police and prevented the provocation.

"The activists were wearing the Georgian Dream t-shirts. Two of them had guns in their belts. They entered the office and started to talk to out activists. As it turned out later, their aim was to record and then show on TV how armed people were gathering in the Georgian Dream office.

It is a fact that the National Movement has the same style of action. They are good at planning provocations," said Kobakhidze.

He thanked the Georgian Dream activities who relevantly responded to the incident and called police.

According to him, police identified the armed persons, one out of which had the National Movement party card.

Georgian Dream Executive Secretary is perhaps on the verge of mental disorder - Sergo Ratiani

September 19

The public already knows that Georgian Dream is Georgian lie, - National Movement member

Sergo Ratiani said in response to Georgian Dream Executive Secretary Irakli Kobakhidze's allegation against the National Movement. Ratiani advised the Georgian Dream Representatives to calm down.

"I understand that when the ruling party loses elections, and in fact, is on the verge of collapse, the Executive Secretary has serious problems and perhaps he is on the verge of mental disorder, but this time, I think they have exceeded all the expectations. Their lies for 4 years have been clear, but this allegation was too much even from Kobakhidze", said Ratiani. Irakli Kobakhidze stated earlier today that armed National Movement activists entered their majoritarian candidate Levan Gogichaishvili's office and tried to stage a provocation yesterday.

He said the Georgian Dream members called police and prevented the provocation.

"The activists were wearing the Georgian Dream t-shirts. Two of them had guns in their belts. They entered the office and started to talk to out activists. As it turned out later, their aim was to record and then show on TV how armed people were gathering in the Georgian Dream office", said Kobakhidze.

Bidzina Ivanishvili is a liar and I demand a public apology from him for his defamatory remarks, - Paata Burchuladze

September 19

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apology from him for his defamatory remarks, - Paata Burchuladze, leader of the movement – The State for the People, said at the meeting with representatives of the non-governmental and international organizations, as well as diplomatic corps.

According to him, today Georgia has an informal leader.

"We all face a bitter reality that is to be changed immediately. Our country is governed not by a government, but by an informal ruler, which can publicly lie.

He accused me of demanding money in exchange for support, which is an absolute lie. Everything that he said about me was a lie. We are dealing with a man who can impudently lie to people. He is appointing and dismissing ministers in our country", he said.

In addition, Paata Burchuladze promised population to drive the country out of "political and economic crisis".

The problem of Republicans is that there is a big difference between their demands and abilities - Bidzina Ivanishvili

September 19

I would bless Republicans in response to their curses and I would wish them to bring their demands closer to their abilities without using me, - former Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili said at a meeting with the regional media. According to him, the problem of the Republican

Party is that there is a big difference between their demands and abilities.

"A miracle is needed to bring their demands and abilities close to each other and they are asking this miracle from me. They are asking recognition of the fact that I promised to make the Republican Party as the leading party and to appoint Davit Usupashvili as Prime Minister", said Ivanishvili.

Some political parties ask citizens to provide their personal data - GYLA

September 21

The Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) calls on citizens not to provide their personal data to anyone and explains that political parties or public officials have no right to force citizens to provide such information. As Ana Natsvlishvili, chairwoman of the Association, said at a press conference, they found out that some political parties ask citizens to provide their personal data without explaining the reason.

According to Natsvlishvili, none of the parties has the right to force a citizen to provide such information.

"The most vulnerable groups are refugees and socially vulnerable people, who have a fear that if they do not give out personal information, they may be deprived of social assistance. Citizens have the right not to provide such information and they will in no way be deprived of assistance because of this,"- said Natsvlishvili.

Georgian Dream publishes so-called Peace Memorandum

September 21

The Georgian Dream has published the so-called Peace Memorandum. According to the memorandum, political parties agree to ensure distancing of their activists from the events held in support of other parties and will take all measures to prevent their activists' interference with the events. "We, participants of the 8 October parliamentary elections, realizing that peaceful elections are a necessary prerequisite for the development of democracy and consolidation of political system in Georgia, realizing that arrangement of counter events against political parties participating in the elections creates the danger of provoking violence, agree to ensure that our activists are distanced from the events held in support of other parties and to take all measures to prevent our activists' interference with the events of other parties.

This Agreement shall be valid throughout the election period, until the publication of the final results", - says the memorandum.

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This Agreement shall be valid throughout the election period, until the publication of the final results", - says the memorandum.

Bidzina Ivanishvili on National Movement: They are trying to mentally pressure society

September 22

There are rumors that National Movement is trying to arrange a revolution but I would like to calm our people that they have no resource for this, - former PM of Georgia Bidzina Ivanishvili said while meeting with regional media. According to him, if they really try to do this, they will see an unbelievable result in return.

'It will be very bad for our country's image,' Ivanishvili said.

According to him National Movement tries to mentally pressure people.

‘They are trying to mentally pressure our society but our people are not that silly,’ Ivanishvili has remarked.

This Agreement shall be valid throughout the election period, until the publication of the final results", - says the memorandum.

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's election observation mission to arrive in Georgia

September 22

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's election observation mission will arrive in Georgia.

The delegation members are: Jose Ignacio Sanchez Amor (Chairman of Committee of Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Special Coordinator); Guglielmo Peak (Deputy Chairman of Political and Security Committee); Roberto Montella (OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Secretary General); Andreas Baker (head of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Executive Office, International Secretariat).

The observation mission members will meet with representatives of political parties.

On September 23, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly observation mission representatives will meet with President Giorgi Margvelashvili and Central Election Commission Chairwoman Tamar Zhvania.

US Ambassador "impressed" by calm pre-election environment in Georgia

September 22

The United States (US) Ambassador to Georgia Ian Kelly has spoken of his positive impressions of the calm pre-election environment in Georgia when he met the country's Minister of Internal Affairs today.

Earlier this morning Kelly sat down with Minister Giorgi Mgebrishvili and discussed a range of topics but primary attention was on Georgia's October 8 Parliamentary Elections.

After the meeting Kelly told local media he was "impressed by Georgia's peaceful pre-election environment". He accepted some incidents had taken place but these were not significant and had been quickly addressed by authorities.

During the meeting I was given details by the Minister about his agency's efforts to ensure a safe and transparent election environment," Kelly said.

Kelly stressed he also had spoken with other state officials and he had received "guarantees" that the forthcoming elections would be conducted in a "free, fair and safe environment".

Minister Mgebrishvili said the meeting with the US diplomat was positive.

September 22

He added this morning the pair discussed the Memorandum of Understanding outlining

cooperation between the Interior Ministry and Georgia's Central Election Commission (CEC) to ensure peaceful elections. They also spoke about a special decree issued by Mgebrishvili himself about police conduct in the pre-election and election periods.

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

September 23

publishes interim report for the 8 October parliamentary elections in Georgia. On September 23, The mission published interim report (30 August – 19 September 2016) assessing the parliamentary elections for compliance with OSCE commitments and other international standards and obligations for democratic elections, as well as with domestic legislation. Observers will follow the candidate registration process, campaign activities, the work of the election administration and relevant state bodies, implementation of the legal framework and the resolution of election disputes.

See more

WPA survey says 25% of respondents support Georgian Dream, 16% - Patriotic Alliance

September 24

According to WPA survey, 25% of respondents support the Georgian Dream and 16% - the

Patriotic Alliance. The survey was presented today at the InterPressNews press club.

The authors of the survey claim that 12% of respondents support the National Movement supports, 4% - Labor Party, 3% - Nino Burjanadze - Democratic Movement, 2% - Free Democrats, 1% - The State for the People, 1% - Tamaz Mechiauri - United Georgia, 1% - other parties, 16% - none of the party, and 18% have not yet made a decision.

According to the WPA chief executive, Chris Wilson, the majority of the Georgian Dream supporters are young men, as well as employed population with high education. The majority of respondents said they would not vote for a party that wants to legalize same-sex marriage. Also, the majority of the population supports integration with the European Union. As for the problems in the country, unemployment was named as the key issue.

According to Chris Wilson, the survey was initiated by the company and it was not ordered by anyone. The study was carried out on 7-11 September and 1329 people were interviewed across the country.

OSCE parliamentary election observers in Georgia note improved campaign environment, call on all sides to avoid provocations

September 24

Leading members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly election observation mission to the 8

October parliamentary elections in Georgia today concluded a three-day visit to the country, noting the active participation of many parties in the campaign, - reads the statement published on the OSCE PA official website.

OSCE parliamentarians will observe the upcoming parliamentary elections in Georgia and provide leadership for the OSCE's short-term observer mission.

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Frank-Walter Steinmeier has appointed Ignacio Sanchez Amor (MP, Spain) as Special Co-ordinator to lead the short-term OSCE observer mission for the 8 October vote. Guglielmo Picchi (MP, Italy) will serve as Head of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegation, which will include almost 40 observers from 17 OSCE participating States.

"I'm pleased to see that Georgian politics are as active as ever, with a range of parties putting forward their platforms and competing for voters," Special Co-ordinator Sanchez Amor said. "Almost all those we met with remarked that campaigning was more free and open than the previous parliamentary elections. I hope that this will continue, and our assessment of the elections will take close note of any developments."

The delegation noted the active competition between parties, including political parties that have long been in politics, as well as new entrants to the political scene. While most interlocutors noted a polarized campaign environment, it was reported to be less tense than the previous parliamentary elections. The delegation took note of allegations of instances of intimidation and disruptions to campaigning, and called on all stakeholders to exercise restraint.

They encouraged stakeholders to make use of official procedures for complaints and investigation of any campaign incidents.

"Everyone we met welcomed the strong atmospheric change since the 2012 elections and I hope that this opportunity for debate on the future of Georgia will be fully seized. This country has many challenges remaining, and politicians must avoid increasing tensions, and instead present real forward-looking options to the voters," said Picchi.

They welcomed the general confidence in the work of the Central Election Commission, and stressed that observers would be closely monitoring the performance of precinct and district election commissions particularly on election day. The delegation expressed concern that sharp rhetoric about the conduct of the elections by electoral contestants might undermine public confidence in the system.

"The active and diligent work also of experienced civil society groups is an additional important contribution to the electoral process. They add crucial transparency to the process that will be helpful particularly to parties in the coming weeks and on election day. I welcome and encourage efforts to reach agreement among parties on campaign conduct, including through a code of conduct," said Secretary General Montella.

The delegation met with the President of Georgia, members of the Central Election Commission, and with representatives from major political parties, observers from the OSCE/ODIHR, civil society representatives, as well as members of the diplomatic community in Tbilisi.

Special Co-ordinator Sanchez Amor serves as Chair of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's human rights committee and as Head of the Spanish Delegation to the Assembly. He has extensive experience in election observation, including having led missions in Turkey and Kyrgyzstan.

Guglielmo Picchi, who will lead the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegation of observers, is the Vice-Chair of the Assembly's political affairs committee. He has observed more than 20 elections in the OSCE region.

The OSCE PA observers work closely with observers from the OSCE/ODIHR, as well as with parliamentary observers from the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly previously observed parliamentary elections in Georgia in 2012, 2008, 2004, 2003, 1999 and 1995, as well as presidential elections in 2013, 2008, 2004, and 1995.

Large part of society is still as poor as it was 4 years ago – Ivanishvili

September 24

A large part of the society is still as poor as it was four years ago, - former PM of Georgia Bidzina Ivanishvili said at the forum held by Mokallake organization.

According to him it is very hard to explain the transformations that have taken place.

A large part of the society is still as poor as it was four years ago. They hardly assess the role of the transformations that took place, he has remarked.

According to Ivanishvili, National Movement increased the number of socially vulnerable people hitting 500 000 but then the new government reduced the number. Ivanishvili says it is very hard to explain to the poor people what has happened.

According to him this is a result of our recent history.

President's Parliamentary Secretary calls on CEC to consider advertising of Patriotic Alliance

September 25

President's Parliamentary Secretary Ana Dolidze has called on the Central Election Commission (CEC) to consider the issue of the election advertising of the Patriotic Alliance spread by Rustavi 2 TV.

According to Dolidze, Rustavi 2 evaded immediate danger by suspending the advertising.

"It is clear that Rustavi 2 evaded immediate danger by suspending political advertising of the Patriotic Alliance, though the final decision in this

field should be made by the Central Election Commission. Therefore, we appeal to them to discuss the issue and make a decision", - said Ana Dolidze.

Rustavi 2 Director Nika Gvaramia posted information about the removal of the advertising of the Patriotic Alliance from Rustavi 2 on his facebook page.

"In the last two days Rustavi 2 TV had broadcasted the advertising of the Patriotic Alliance several times (6 times) within the framework of free election advertising commitment. The advertising was of openly anti-Turkish character, provoking ethnic hatred and xenophobic propaganda, which contradicts the Constitution and laws", - says Gvaramia.

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly election mission sums up three-day visit to Georgia

September 25

Leading members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly election observation mission to the 8 October parliamentary elections in Georgia concluded a three-day visit to the country, noting the active participation of many parties in the campaign, - says the information posted on the OSCE website.

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OSCE parliamentary election observers in Georgia note improved campaign environment OSCE parliamentary election observers in Georgia noted improved campaign environment and called on all sides to avoid provocations, - says the information posted on the OSCE website.

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"While meeting participants highlighted the polarization of the election environment, they also noted that compared to previous elections, the tension level is low. The delegation took into note information provided about intimidation and violations, and called on all parties concerned to show restraint. They also called on the parties concerned to use official procedures and appeal against the pre-election incidents," - reads the statement of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.



By the initiative of the Election Administration (EA), mock elections was conducted for the voters with visual impairments in village Tsikhisdziri of Kobuleti region. Up to 30 persons practiced the special tactile ballot guide, which gives them the possibility to vote independently.

The new tactile ballot guide was selected on the basis international experience research and together with the representatives of NGOs working on the issues of voters with visual impairments. Sophio Sitchinava, Head of Coordination, Planning and Reporting Department presented detailed information about the marking ballot papers and using the guide.

Mock elections was conducted in cooperation with the NGO “Union of Blinds of Georgia”. EA maintains the practice of conducting meetings and informing voters about the mentioned innovation.



Today Tamar Zhvania, Chairperson of the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Georgia and Giorgi Mghebrishvili, Minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) of Georgia signed the memorandum of understanding (MoU).

“Today, we moved to the new step of cooperation, since we aim to ensure safe election environment for everyone, which meets international standards. We intend to organize elections for the voters on a high professional level for the October 8 Parliamentary Elections, where they may perform their civil duty in a completely free atmosphere. We utterly acknowledge the urgency of firm protection of principles of political neutrality and we ensure those principles in the frames of today’s agreement. In order to become more successful, we plan to organize workshops on elections and security issues, which will enable our staff members to professionally serve each voter. For this purpose, Election Administration (EA) developed security training module for Precinct Election Commissions (PEC) for the upcoming elections.

Within the working meetings between EA and the MIA as well as in collaboration with International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and their expert support, we elaborated the memorandum of understanding; today, by signing this document, we publicly declare our readiness to ensure equal election rights and arrange safe and transparent election environment. I would like to express my gratitude towards the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the cooperation and support and also thank to IFES and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for supporting security of electoral processes” - Tamar Zhvania addressed to the media representatives after the ceremony of signing the MoU with the Minister of Internal Affairs. In addition, supplementary forms and legal frameworks of cooperation were defined within the MoU between the CEC and Ministry of Internal Affairs. Joint trainings and working meetings will be held in the frames of MoU.

The document includes the recommendations of IFES; the expert of IFES was actively involved in drafting the concept on election security.

Giorgi Mghebrishvili, after signing the memorandum stated that the CEC and the Ministry of Internal Affairs will actively cooperate to ensure the voting process in a free and safe environment. “I think that proper development of the cooperation between the CEC and MIA will guarantee the essential basis for peaceful, transparent and credible election environment”- noted the minister after the ceremony.



The meeting was held at the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Georgia between the Chairperson of the CEC and the Ambassador of the United States of America.

At the meeting, Tamar Zhvania presented to H.E. Ian C. Kelly information on the preparation process for the upcoming parliamentary elections and noted that the Election Administration (EA) is ready to conduct fair, credible and transparent elections in accordance with the international best practices.

At the meeting, Tamar Zhvania talked about the updated unified list of the voters, registered election subjects and observer organizations. The pre-election environment was also discussed at the meeting.

H.E. Ian C. Kelly positively evaluated the activities implemented by the CEC for the October 8 Parliamentary Elections.

The meeting was attended by Archil Anasashvili, Head of CEC Legal Department and Laura Hochla, Political Officer of the US Embassy to Georgia.



Representatives of the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Georgia held meeting with women voters in village Jandari in Gardabani region. At the meeting, activities implemented by the Election Administration (EA) for the Parliamentary elections of October 8, 2016 were introduced to the women voters. It should be noted that, ethnic minorities can verify their personal data on ethnic minority languages at the CEC web-page and find their polling station. Also, any information can be received through the CEC Information Center on Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. At the meeting, head of Coordination, Planning and Reporting department emphasized the role of women and their engagement in electoral processes.

The CEC informational video clips are also, translated in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. In addition, various educational projects were implemented in the municipalities densely populated with ethnic minorities.

The meeting was held within the frames of the project “Electoral Guide for Ethnic Minorities” financed by the CEC Training Center and implemented by the NGO “Union of Azerbaijani Women of Georgia”.



Officials of the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Georgia met with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Election Observation Mission to Georgia. Tamar Zhvania, the CEC Chairperson shared the information to the members of the delegation about the preparation process for the Parliamentary Elections, 8 October 2016 and admitted, that the Election Administration (EA) is keen on conducting fair, credible and transparent elections in line with international standards. The Chairperson also talked about the updated list of voters, registered election subjects and observer organizations during the meeting. Pre-election environment was also discussed at the meeting. Hereby, the members of the delegation visited the CEC center for counting the election results, where the process will be online broadcasted by 360-degree video camera.

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“The meeting was extremely important and interesting. We introduced the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegation with all kind of information related to the upcoming elections, including the current pre-election campaign and the topics of daily agenda. Also, the questions were raised regarding the legislative amendments. We fully shared the information about the services the CEC will to voters. We discussed all the essential aspects related to the E-day, namely ensuring free and fair election process and peaceful environment for voters” – noted Tamar Zhvania at the end of the meeting.

At the meeting, held at the CEC hosted the Head of Delegation, Chair of the Committee for Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions, Mr. Jose Ignacio Sanchez Amor, Vice-Chair of the Committee for Political Affairs and Security and Head of OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Observation, Mr. Guglielmo Picchi, OSCE PA Secretary General, Mr. Roberto Montella and Chief of the Executive Office OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, International Secretariat, Mr. Andreas Baker.



The Central Election Commission (CEC) of Georgia, for the first time in election history, will run the pilot project that enables every interested person to observe the counting process of the 8 October election results at the CEC premises.

By using 360 degree video camera, the process will be broadcasted via social networks - Facebook, YouTube and the CEC official webpage; the service is another technique to guarantee the transparency of the activities of the Election Administration.

This initiative proposed by the CEC, is another step forward to support the effective democratic processes.

Join us and observe one of the most important procedures of election process!



The Chairperson of the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Georgia presented interim report of Election Administration (EA) to media. The report covers the period starting from the date of calling the Parliamentary Elections on June 8 until September 8. The report reflects the significant activities performed by the EA for the upcoming elections.

“We have introduced various innovative services to voters and electoral stakeholders. The main innovation that we announced today refers to the service that enables everyone to receive information via Facebook and Youtube, and online observe the process of counting election results at the CEC. The special 360 degree video camera gives possibility to any interested person to monitor the process of counting election results using social networks. Summary protocols are submitted at the CEC, where data and protocols are processed, accordingly everyone has opportunity to observe this process publicly. This is one big step taken forward that contributes to the transparency and accessibility of the electoral processes as well as increases credibility towards the election results” – stated Ms. Zhvania while making comments with journalists.

At the presentation specially conducted for the journalists, Tamar Zhvania emphasized several important issues including voters, Precinct Election Commissions (PEC), observers, CEC information campaign, cooperation with stakeholders and the gender equality policy of the CEC.

According to the CEC Chairperson, as of August 12, number of voters stands to 3 510 514 including 1 887 130 (53.75%) women and 1 623 384 (46.24%) men.

In order to simplify the personal data verification process in the unified list of voters, the CEC introduced several innovative services to voters. Citizens may verify data through the CEC official web-page (voters.cec.gov.ge); for the first time this year, voters have possibility to verify their and their family members' personal data using 7000 quick payment terminals as well as via smart phones and tabs suitable for “android” system.

Voters also can receive information in which election precinct they are registered and see the location of the polling station at the map. Since June 10, the mentioned services was used by 954 543 voters.

As of September 8, 25 election subjects were registered for the upcoming elections, including 19 political parties and 6 election blocs. 28 political parties were rejected to be registered/ registration was revoked. In addition, 57 initiative groups are registered for the October 8 parliamentary Elections. As for the election precincts, October 8 elections will be held at 3, 634 election precincts in 73 majoritarian election districts. 56 out-of-country election precincts were also established for the upcoming parliamentary elections. In addition 2 election precincts were created in Afghanistan, namely Bagram and Mazar E-sharif.

74 local and 32 international organizations (20 Election Management Bodies and Embassies of 4 countries) were registered at the CEC and DEC to monitor the elections. In addition, 34 media organizations were accredited to cover elections.

As Tamar Zhvania announced, in order to timely inform voters and electoral stakeholders, the CEC created a new, user-friendly and informative webpage which is in line with modern standards. The CEC official web-page is the first in Georgia, which is fully adapted for visually impaired voters. For ensuring inclusive election environment and equal conditions for each groups of society the CEC took steps forward for improving communication with persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities, increasing number of adapted election precincts and translating election documentation for ethnic minority voters.

By the CEC initiative, representatives of the EA and local observer organizations signed the Code of Conduct and agreed to be guided by election legislation, international standards and mentioned CoC in their activities.

The CEC signed the memorandum of understanding (MoU) together with the Inter-Agency Task Force for Free and Fair Elections (IATF) and nine NGOs on the use of administrative resources for the upcoming parliamentary elections. Five political parties also joined the MoU. The signatory parties agreed on uniform interpretation of Articles 45, 48 and 49 of the Election Code of Georgia.

Today Tamar Zhvania also talked about the educational projects implemented by the EA. As she stated the CEC Training Center ensures qualification raising for the representatives at all level of EA. The guidelines were developed for the precinct and district election commission members and were translated in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages. Informational and educational programs were implemented for electoral stakeholders and manuals were elaborated for the lawyers of local self-governing bodies and media representatives. Distance learning program is also available for electoral stakeholders.

It should be noted that the EA for the first time in its history adopted the Gender Equality Policy Document which defines principal and professional approach towards the gender equality and grants strategic importance to the equal participation of women and men in elections.

As the CEC Chairperson stated at the meeting held with media, the EA will maintain the practice of informing electoral stakeholders about its activities, which is essential for ensuring transparency of election processes and election environment in line with international standards.

Interim Report of the Central Election Commission of Georgia

GYLA continues to monitor 2016 Parliamentary Elections of Georgia. On this stage, we would like to draw the attention of society to violations and tendencies outlined in current period, during pre-elections process, that took place in different regions of Georgia and that, besides being violation of Election Code of Georgia, can negatively affect free, peaceful and equal elections environment.

Outlined violations and tendencies:

1. September 19, Irakli Kobakhidze, Executive Secretary of “Georgian Dream” made a statement regarding the activists of “National Movement” entering office of Levan Gogichaishvili, Majoritarian MP Candidate of “Georgian Dream” early in the morning on September 19, two activists out of them being the members of Sevdia Ugrekhelidze election staff. According to Kobakhidze, the mentioned persons were wearing “Georgian Dream” t-shirts and were armed with guns. Their aim of this act was video capturing to show that people with criminal mentality are gathering in the election staff of “Georgian Dream”. Executive Secretary of “Georgian Dream” also stated that activists that were on place at that time called for police and the police examined the situation on ground.

On the same day, Sevdia Ugrekhelidze, Majoritarian MP Candidate of “National Movement” for Saburtalo region responded on the mentioned statement and assessed it as a false accusation. Sevdia Ugrekhelidze stated that the mentioned persons are dismissed from election staff and at the moment of abovementioned act they had no connection with “National movement”.

Later, media reported that Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia started investigation of this fact under Article 236, part 2, illegal purchase, possession, carrying of gun, however no official statement was made by MIA regarding this issue.

1. On September 13, representatives of initiative group of Irakli Okruashvili, Gori Majoritarian MP Candidate, delivered different types of food to residents of building 11, 13 and 15 in Gori, Shindisi highway. It is noteworthy that before delivering the products, Irakli Okruashvili, Gori Majoritarian MP Candidate had meeting with residents. Mamuka Nozadze, Majoritarian MP Candidate of “Patriotic Alliance – United opposition” for Gori, appealed to Prosecutor’s Office regarding this fact and according to media information. One of the residents confirms the fact of delivering the products.

1. September 18, “Color festival” took place in Poti with funding of Otar Kharchilava, Majoritarian MP Candidate of Poti from political party “National Forum” and with initiative of youth wing of the mentioned party according to media information. Photos and information regarding the abovementioned event were also posted on candidate’s agitation facebook page.

Colored powders were free on the festival and were available to anybody. Adults and children were participating in the festival. Event organizers (representatives of youth wing of Otar Kharchilava, Majoritarian MP Candidate) were wearing agitation t-shirts. The Candidate himself was also participating in the event.

1. Also, according to media information, flyers were distributed in Poti streets for several days, according to which youth wing of Otar Kharchilava, Majoritarian MP Candidate of political party “National Forum” invites youth of Poti 17 to 30 years old, to participate in different recreational activities (excursion, karaoke, photo-sessions etc.) The article indicates that “National Forum” covers all costs.

1. According to information received from different sources by GYLA, political parties are recording personal information of voters (name, surname, personal ID number); however, they do not explain the aim of gathering this kind of personal information. The most significant is the fact that target groups for the mentioned persons are socially vulnerable citizens, representatives of ethnic minorities and refugees.

It is noteworthy that name, surname and personal ID number is personal information and can only be processed with consent of the subject.

Gathering personal data of citizens implies the dangerous tendency of indirect influence on voters will, that is most significant when the data subjects are socially vulnerable, representatives of ethnic minorities and refugees.

1. Furthermore, according to information provided to GYLA monitors, one of the representatives of local self-government tasked all the employees of non-commercial legal entity for each of them to bring 10 supporters on Parliamentary elections on October 8, 2016 and before that even bring the copies of the IDs.

1. According to information published in Guria News, Bela Shatirishvili, representative of Chokhatauri Municipality Gamgebeli participated in pre-elections campaign held in administrative entity of village Shua Amagleba during the working hours.

In order to held elections in peaceful, competitive and free of violence environment we urge state agencies and electoral subjects with recommendations, namely:

Ministry of Internal Affairs:

Ensure timely and thorough investigation of all those facts or alleged violations related to elections process that are under their competence in accordance with law. It also is important that the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia conduct investigation of all facts that has taken place recently and pays special attention to cases that may contain different types of threat, coercion, intimidation or violence and can pose a threat to conducting pre-election processes in peaceful environment.

Audit Office and Elections Administration:

Study the circumstances described above within their competence and take proper legal actions;
Inter-Agency Commission for free and fair elections:

Study alleged facts of violation of Election legislation of Georgia by public servants and develop proper recommendations;
Representatives of local self-government:

Maintain political neutrality and do not exceed the scope of authority granted to them by law;
Personal Data Protection Inspector:

Do not allow violation of requirements of the Law of Georgia on Personal Data Protection and take appropriate actions, within its competence, considering principles of Inspector's activities.

Election subjects, representatives of Parties and activists:

Refrain from any kind of provocation and violent actions and facilitate conducting pre-elections period in accordance with legal norms and standards.
Citizens:

You have rights, not to give out personal data, and representatives of political parties, public servants do not have rights to force you on giving out information of this kind.

Signs of vote-buying in National Forum's Poti election campaign

A statement posted on social media by the Youth Wing of Poti majoritarian MP candidate Otar Kharchilava representing the party National Forum invites Poti youth (17 to 30 years of age) to take part in a variety of activities (field trip, karaoke, photo session, etc.).

A representative of TI Georgia called one of the numbers indicated in the statement. The recipient of the call confirmed that the events are funded by the National Forum and are directed at persons who are already involved in Otar Kharchilava's campaign or are planning to do so in the future. According to the same person, several of these events have already taken place.

We believe that these actions exhibit signs of vote-buying. According to Article 47 of the Election Code, vote-buying is defined as giving of funds, gifts, and other material possessions by electoral subjects, candidates for electoral subject, and their representatives to the citizens of Georgia, personally or through other persons; distribution or dissemination of any goods free of charge; and motivation of Georgian citizens by promising to give them funds, securities, and other material possessions (irrespective of their value).

We call on the State Audit Office and the Chief Prosecutor's Office to investigate the above case and, if necessary, take measures prescribed by the law.

Municipal text messages in the service of the ruling party

Executive bodies in some municipalities of Georgia have recently begun sending emails and text messages (SMS) to citizens about infrastructure projects that have been completed in their area. With 2-3 weeks remaining until parliamentary elections, such messages were received by the residents of Batumi, Kobuleti, Kutaisi, Khashuri, Tskaltubo, Martvili, Zugdidi, Telavi, Ozurgeti, Zestaponi, Keda, Poti, Senaki and Akhaltsikhe municipalities.

In addition, Zugdidi City Hall started publishing a newspaper called City News, the purpose of which is to inform voters in detail about the local government's work in recent years (construction of mini-stadiums, funding of gifted students, better distribution of taxpayer money, etc.). On June 27, 2016, Zugdidi City Hall announced a tender on procuring publishing services for the newspaper. The contract worth GEL 8,886 was granted to a publishing company called Color.

While the decision of municipal authorities to employ modern means of communication with citizens is to be welcomed, its timing certainly raises a few questions.

Providing citizens with information about government completed projects starting right before the elections may be construed as an attempt to influence voter decision in favor of the ruling party. Even though the text messages do not explicitly call for support of the ruling party, the fact that most municipalities have started this communication towards the end of the pre-election period suggests that the promotion of projects completed by the current government contains signs of at least indirect use of administrative resources for election purpose.

The text messages also raise questions regarding the protection of personal data of their recipients. The municipalities have not disclosed the sources from which they have obtained the telephone numbers of citizens registered in on their territory.

Transparency International Georgia calls on:

- Municipalities - not to use personal data of voters registered on their territory in a way that would raise doubts about the use of administrative resources for election purposes and protection of personal data.
- Personal Data Protection Inspector - to investigate how the municipalities have managed to obtain citizens phone numbers