



International Center for Civic Culture

Report on Pre – election environment assessment - Marneuli, Gardabani, Bolnisi, Tetrtskaro, Dmanisi (1 September -1 October)

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Introduction

The project, under which the study of pre-election environment was carried out, aimed at supporting civic integration of ethnic minorities living in Kvemo Kartli region, raising their awareness on the political and public life of the country; improving their civil rights, in particular, electoral rights for the more effective use in relevant environment.

Concerning the goals and objectives of the pre-study observation, ethnic minority community members, aged 18-27 years are involved in assessment process.

Pre-election environment assessment criteria

Methodology and relevant criteria were identified for assessing and evaluating Pre-election environment. The assessment criteria were developed on the following basis:

1. All the prerequisites should ensure the credibility of the elections, justice and democracy;
2. Legal framework of various activities of the parties involved, responsibilities.

Following methods were used for the study of pre-election environment: observation / content analysis / interviews.

Pre-election assessment was made on the following criteria:

- Level of pre-election activity of the subjects - 5-0 points
- Media coverage of the election campaign - 5-0 points
- the pre-election process, ensuring equal environment - 5-0 points
- voter awareness and involvement in the election process - 5-0 points
- inclusiveness of pre - election process - 5-0 points

5	4	3	2	1	0
Very good	Almost good	Medium	Lower than medium	Bad	Negative

The general tendencies

Pre-election process in Kvemo Kartli election districts, which are mentioned in this report, overall went in peaceful environment during September. By this time there aren't revealed any disorders, which could affect the outcome of the elections. Although, in general 17 parties / blocs have registered candidates to be elected by a majority system in Kvemo Kartli election districts - their activities are different. In specified period of time, by our observation in the towns and villages mainly 6 election subjects conducted an active campaign, They are: "Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia"; "United National Movement"; "David Tarkhan-Mouravi, Irma Inashvili - Alliance of Patriots"; "The united opposition"; "Irakli Alasania - Free Democrats"; "Paata Burchuladze – State for people" and "Nino Burjanadze - Democratic Movement." It should be noted, however, that" Paata Burchuladze – State for people" was not activity observed in Gardabani. Block

named the candidate proposed by their partner "Girchi", but after the end of the partnership with "Girchi"- block was left without Gardabani majoritarian candidate.

Creating special obstacles cannot be named as the reason for unequal election activities of election subjects in Kvemo Kartli. The only reason can be the party's financial situation.

Inclusiveness of pre-election environment

Political parties took into account voter's low level of knowledge of the state language and prepared propaganda materials, the candidate's election posters, newsletters, brochures in Azerbaijani language. It should also be noted that, two parties have the most number of campaign materials prepared and placed in the central areas of the settlements. These parties are the "Georgian Dream" and "National Movement."

Media coverage of the election campaign

Despite the fact that part of Regional media, managed to arrange the election debates, as well as prepared printed journalistic materials about programs and visions of the parties, still they cannot afford fully informing of voters in Kvemo Kartli.

Voter participation and awareness level

Problems related to the election awareness still remain in the villages. Because of lack of information on education and media products in minority-language, voters express less enthusiasm for the elections. As already discussed, due to lack of finances, political parties in their turn, cannot afford to fully cover the electoral districts in the settlements as part of the election campaign.

For activating voters, election advertisements on minority language were placed in Kvemo Kartli television. Also, Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Training Center "held a grant competition and sponsored projects, aimed towards the voter's activation. Part of the projects were also implemented in Kvemo Kartli region, which include financing of preparation of print and television products. Despite these efforts, interest and involvement of minorities in the electoral process is still low in settlements which are far from the regional centers.

Election Subjects

In **Gardabani # 31 constituency** - 11 electoral subjects has nominated majoritarian candidates

3. The Block "Nino Burjanadze - Democratic Movement - Alakhverdi bakhtiarov

5. The election bloc "United National Movement" - Ramin Bayramov

6. "Usupashvili - Republicans" - Rasul Gasanov

7. "Tamaz Mechiauri for United Georgia" - Mubaris Karaev

8. The Block "David Tarkhan-Mouravi, Irma Inashvili - Alliance of Patriots, the United Opposition" - Gela Khutsishvili

10. "Shalva Natelashvili - Georgian Labour Party" - Nino Metreveli

16 "Unified Communist Party of Georgia" - Pakhrad Tanirguliev

25. "Kakha Dzagania, Soso Shatberashvili, Paata Jibladze, Archil Benidze – left-wing alliance" - Levan Abramishvili

27. "Irakli Alasania - Free Democrats" - Giga Molashkhia

28: "Road of Zviadi – On the name of Lord" – Phiziur Mamedov

41."Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia" - Savalan Mirzoev

In **Marneuli # 35 constituency** - 10 electoral subjects has nominated majoritarian candidates

1. The Block "Paata Burchuladze - State for People" - Kamran Mamedov

3. The Block "Nino Burjanadze - Democratic Movement" - Ilia kakhramanov

5. Election bloc "United National Movement" - Azer Suleymanov

7. "Tamaz Mechiauri United Georgia" - David Nozadze

8 The Block "David Tarkhan-Mouravi, Irma Inashvili - Alliance of Patriots, the United Opposition" - Elmar Gasanov

19. Election Bloc "Topadze-Industrials, Our Fatherland" – Folad Khalilov

22. "Merab Kostava Society" - Alexander Gurgenishvili

23. The Block "Our People, People's Party" - Levan Glonti

27. "Irakli Alasania - Free Democrats" - George Sisvadze

41. "Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia" - Ruslan Hajiyev

In **Marneuli # 36 constituency** - 8 electoral subjects has nominated majoritarian candidates

1. The Block "Paata Burchuladze - State for People" - Israfil Bayramov

3. The Block "Nino Burjanadze - Democratic Movement - Vepkhia Gurgenishvili

5. Election bloc "United National Movement" - Akmamed Imamquliyev

7. "Tamaz Mechiauri United Georgia" - Eldar Mustafayev

8. The Block "David Tarkhan-Mouravi, Irma Inashvili - Alliance of Patriots, the United Opposition" - Ali Isaev

17. "Georgia" - Omar Tsamalaidze

23. The Block "Our People, People's Party" - Teona Kavtaria

41. "Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia" - Tamaz Naveriani

In Bolnisi # 33 polling constituency there are held both parliamentary and Gangebeli extraordinary elections. This was led by nomination of Gogi Meshveliani as "Georgian Dream" majoritarian candidate.

Bolnisi majoritarian candidates are opposed to each other in the next 8 election:

1. The Block "Paata Burchuladze - State for People" - Ramiz bakirov

5. The election bloc "United National Movement" Samira Ismailova

7. "Tamaz Mechiauri United Georgia" Farman jeiranli

8. The Block -"David Tarkhan-Mouravi, Irma Inashvili - Alliance of Patriots, the united opposition" Dali Mamulashvili

10. "Shalva Natelashvili - Georgian Labour Party - Marina Gunashvili

27. "Irakli Alasania - Free Democrats" - baniamin Kasymov

28: "Road of Zviadi – On the name of Lord - Guliko Parjiani

41."Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia" - Gogi Meshveliani

In Bolnisi Municipality extraordinary elections, 4 parties / election blocs and one candidate from initiative group are participating. In particular:

The Block "Paata Burchuladze - State for People" - George Samkharadze;

"United National Movement" - Tristan Beridze;

"David Tarkhan-Mouravi, Irma Inashvili - Alliance of Patriots, the united opposition" - Goderzi Mikeladze;

"Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia" - David Sherazadishvili

Initiative group - Elguja Japaridze.

In Dmanisi # 34 constituency - 8 electoral subjects has nominated majoritarian candidates

- # 1. The Block "Paata Burchuladze – State for people," Pavle Aduashvili
- # 2. "Progressive Democratic Movement" - Armenak Sarkisyan
- # 3. The Block "Nino Burjanadze - Democratic Movement" - Jumber Ananidze
- # 5. Election bloc "United National Movement" - Bakuri Mgeladze
- # 8. The Block "David Tarkhan-Mouravi, Irma Inashvili - Alliance of Patriots, the united opposition" - Namig Bayramov
- # 26. "National Forum" - Alexander Noniashvili
- # 27. "Irakli Alasania - Free Democrats" - Jemal Vanadze
- # 41. "Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia" - Kakha Okriashvili

In **Tetritskhara # 32 constituency** - 8 electoral subjects has nominated majoritarian candidates

- # 1. The Block "Paata Burchuladze – State for People" Alexi Noniadze
- # 2. "Progressive Democratic Movement" - Ketevan Ugrehelidze
- # 3. The Block "Nino Burjanadze - Democratic Movement - Nunu Natobadze
- # 5. Election bloc "United National Movement" Nugzar Tsiklauri
- # 7. "Tamaz Mechiauri United Georgia" - Badri laziashvili
- # 8. The Block "David Tarkhan-Mouravi, Irma Inashvili - Alliance of Patriots, the united opposition" – Mamuka Areshidze
- # 27. "Irakli Alasania - Free Democrats" - Vaja Bekauri
- # 41. "Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia" - Goderzi Chankseliani

Alleged facts of pressure / violations

"National Movement" Marneuli majoritarian candidate, Ahmed Imamkuliev speaks about obstruction to election campaign. He stated in that he can't conduct the election campaign in Marneuli market. The Candidate publishes a video in social network , which shows that a person, naming himself as the owner of the market, asks him to leave the territory. Imamquliv says the reason is that the owner of the market is relative of "Georgian Dream" majoritarian candidate Tamaz Naveriani .

"National Movement" Tetrtskaro organization also released a video which shows how a small group of people hanging posters of the "Georgian Dream" candidate on their agitation materials. "National Movement" relates the video to the incident that took place after this.

On September 16, at 16:30, in Tetrtskaro, "Georgian Dream" activists physically assaulted "National Movement" activists in the courtyard of "United National Movement" Nugzar Tsiklauri election headquarters. As opposition says the main reason was the video record they made several days before concerning damage of part posters.

Nino Metreveli, Gardabani Majority candidate of Labor Party, is suing for damaging agitation materials. Bolnisi Office of National Movement is also speaking about problems regarding placing agitation materials. They have addressed the complaints to the District Election Commission.

Debates between Marneuli majority candidates Vefkhia Gurgenshvili and Folad Khalilov ended with fighting in Kvemo Kartli TV live on September 21. Vefkhia Gurgenshvili, majority candidate of Nino Burjanadze - Democratic Georgia has insulted Folad Khalilov, majority candidate of "Tofadze - Industrials", which responded by throwing a pen to his opponent that led to the fighting.

By this time, "Georgian Young Lawyers Association" Kvemo Karti office is defending the rights of two activists from "Nino Burjanadze - Democratic Movement" Gardabani organization.

Head of "Nino Burjanadze - Democratic Movement" Gardabani election office, Rashid Musaev, living in village Birlik (Gardabani) addressed GYLA Rustavi office. According to him, certain people put pressure on him because of his political activities. Firakhmad Gasanov, living in village Tazakendi, also applied GYLA Rustavi office. He works as a teacher in Tazakendi public school and was one of the founders and active member of political party "Georgian Dream", but because of some disagreements with party officials he left the party and joined "Nino Burjanadze - democratic Movement", where he is actively involved in the election process. Due to this ruling party's local officials exerted verbal and psychological pressure, to make him stop party membership.

Rashid Musaev and Pirakhmad Gasanov addressed Rustavi district prosecutor's office concerning these facts.

Complaints Received by Election Commissions

In given period, that the report covers, 6 complaints have been submitted in CEC.

Alliance of Patriots submitted a complaint in Tetrtskharo Election Commission on September 15. The complaint was about damaging their majority candidate Mamuka Areshidze's Posters. Commission discussed the issue and addressed Tetrtskharo Municipality to react.

Bolnisi office of National Movement appealed District Election Commission. The party says that Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia has violated Article 5 of 2016 Bolnisi Municipality decree (about placing election poster). The party says in complaint that in Bolnisi on the election boards, where each party can place on one poster Georgian Dream has placed 8 its posters. Commission addressed the appeal to the Board of Bolnisi municipality for reacting.

National Movement appealed Tetrtskharo Election Commission on September 20, where the party says: "There were not placed wall lists at Algeti Election Precinct and at 15:30 on September 17 the station was closed". The complaint was rejected by the commission. The commission discussion report says that they analyzed photo materials of existing conditions and precinct members' explanations. The district commission finds that in the given time there were placed wall lists and Chairperson and Secretary were at the place while other members were distributing voters' cards.

An appeal was submitted in Tetrtskharo District Election Commission about damaging election posters on September 20. The author of the complaint was Patriots' Alliance's Tetrtskharo district office's chairperson Nugzar Liparteliani. The complaint says that on Aghmashenebeli Street in Tetrtskharo Georgian Dream activists have placed election posters over their posters. Commission addressed the appeal to the Board of Tetrtskharo municipality for reacting.

Election Bloc Paata Burchuladze - State for People also appealed Tetrtskharo District Election Commission on September 24, about obstructing them to place election posters. The complaints says that their supporter was placing agitation materials in village Aghtaklia 200 meters away from Election Precinct and representative of Gardabani Gamgebeli didn't let them to place posters. The appeal was addressed to the Board of Gardabani municipality.

Another appeal was submitted in Tetrtskharo District Election Commission on September 25 by monitoring organization Law Enforcement Reforms Centre regarding Precinct Election Commission activities. The monitoring organization writes in the complaint that on September 25, they were at village Ardisubani Election Precinct and it was closed at 13:23. Video material was also submitted as proof. District Election Commission has discussed the complaint and issued an admonition as disciplinary measures against Chairperson of Election Precinct Ketevan Giorgadze.

During the period (September) that covers given report no appeals were submitted in Gardabani, Marneuli and Dmanisi Election Commissions.

Usage of Administrative resources

We see positive activities towards ruling party by the Central Government that started in pre-election period. One example of this can be a simplified land registration that started from August 1 and offers people to prepare all the necessary documentation for free. Also in the pre-election period began home ownership program for eco migrant for 1 GEL. At the moment only in Tetrtskharo

municipality 109 families received home for 1 GEL. Such Activities do not violate law, but implementing these programs at this period affects voters' faith and puts parties in non-equal conditions. Implementing SMS system in municipalities can be discussed in the same way. In pre-election period Government started sending SMS to people about what social or infrastructural projects are going on or finished in their municipalities.

Election entities speak in private conversation about involving public figures in election campaign during their duty time, but they mainly can't provide any proof for such information.

Overall Assessment of Election Process

At the moment there is no problematic election environment besides identified possible obstruction issues. Parties have possibilities to run pre-election campaign according to their human and financial resources.