

Brief preliminary report on activities of Public Movement “Multinational Georgia” on the day of Elections to the Parliament of Georgia of May 21, 2008 and the assessment of the polling results

Public Movement “Multinational Georgia” carried out a complex monitoring of the pre-election process and the Election Day in the Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kakheti regions, where it had 310 observers present at 247 polling stations covered by the organization. Based on the previous experience, the organization improved its approaches to these elections, in particular “Multinational Georgia” used the multifaceted approach to create an observation scheme. When identifying the polling stations, where the observers had to be stationed, the organization considered three priority trends: most difficult to access, most numerous in ethnic composition and most problematic polling stations, proven during the past presidential elections. The observation scheme envisaged also movement of the local observers from one (observer’s) region to another, thus avoiding influence through friendship, family or other contacts, which usually prevent the observers from fulfilling their obligations.

Financial support

The programme was implemented through financial assistance provided by the Delegation of the European Commission to Georgia and Armenia, CORDAID Fund, Eurasia Partnership Foundation, USAID, IFES, as well as Women Fund in Georgia.

“Multinational Georgia” – Central Election Commission (CEC) – Local Administration CEC

With regard to the pre-election monitoring and observation on the Election Day “Multinational Georgia” characterizes the work of the CEC members as cooperation-oriented, in particular since “Multinational Georgia” draw attention of the district and precinct election commissions to the fact that proportionally large number of people was transferred from general voter list to its supplement without making proper remarks in the general list (e.g. precinct #49 in Gardabani region).

CEC also paid immediate attention to the situation in the village Sartichala, Gardabani region, where the rumours were spread among teachers (who, generally, form the precinct election commissions) on eligibility of one and the same person voting instead his/her family members.

Observers fulfilled their mission through reacting to more than 135 violations of the law at 42 precincts (on 37 of which respective complaints were drawn up and violations immediately stopped at 5 precincts by appealing to the Commission chairman) and filing 60 complaints (reflecting information on all noted violations), 40 of which were considered admissible for consideration by the precinct election commissions, 16 – by district election commissions and 4 were considered inadmissible. Based on the joint complaints filed by the observers of “Multinational Georgia”, other observer organizations and mass-media the results of voting at 11 precincts were ruled invalid, more than 20 complaints were allowed and further breaches of law stopped, including multiple voting (so called “carousel voting”), repeated voter inking, proxy voting; also other voting procedures foreseen by the law were complied with (particularly, in Gardabani, Marneuli (precincts #20, #35, #31, #26, #25, #24), Gori (precincts #54, #89, #3, #48), Akhalkalaki (#20, #68, #47, #49), Ninotsminda district).

In some districts (e.g. Lagodekhi, Rustavi and Akhalkalaki) the representatives of the election administrations obstructed filling of complaints.

More detailed information will be provided in the final report, which will be available at the organisation’s web-page and distributed to the international organizations, non-governmental organizations, political parties and mass-media.

Local administrations

It should be noted, that the observers of “Multinational Georgia” and the representatives of other non-governmental organizations faced inadequate attitudes and pressure obstructing their work, particularly in Sagarejo, Akhaltsikhe, Borjomi, Bolnisi and Gardabani (including pressure, intimidation and direct violence).

Typical violations noted by our observers at 42 precincts:

- Voter inking not applied (at 42 precincts);
- Inadequate regulation of access of voters to the polling stations (at 42 precincts);
- Multiple voting (at 7 precincts);
- Proxy voting (at 4 precincts);
- Ballot box stuffing (at 3 precincts)
- Pressure over the voters (at 42 precincts), including threatening and direct physical violence (at 3 precincts);
- Stopping the voting process without undertaking respective procedures (at 2 precincts).

Parallel vote count

As regards the parallel vote count undertaken by “Multinational Georgia”, the results showed several trends:

- Unlike other regions, in Gardabani and Kakheti attempts were noted of the election commission to lower the number of those who cast their votes in the first half of the day, along with the drastically high turnouts in the second half of the day;
- The copies of the summary protocols of several precincts (up to 10 precincts covered by our organization) and the same protocols received in the respective districts provided different data.

Total, the number of the voters, who cast their votes, in the regions, where “Multinational Georgia” undertook monitoring:

Kakheti – 156 524

Shida Kartli – 189 507

Kvemo Kartli – 180 506

Samtskhe-Javakheti – 115 782

The number of the voters, who cast their votes, in the precincts, where “Multinational Georgia” fixed violations:

Kakheti – 3 115

Shida Kartli – 1 695

Kvemo Kartli – 9 332

Samtskhe-Javakheti – 5 204

The Number of the voters, recorded in the protocols at the precincts, where the polling results were annulled – **5 555**

The final results of the parallel vote count are available at <http://e-vote-count.info> or can be requested at the office of “Multinational Georgia”.

Based on the above mentioned information available to “Multinational Georgia” on the number of voters at the precincts, where our observers filed their complaints, the organization concludes that the revision of voting at “problematic” 37 precincts does not provide ground for revising the polling results in the mentioned regions in general.

“Multinational Georgia” deems important to note that, despite a range of the above mentioned violations, on past Parliamentary elections activities of all actors related to the elections, namely political parties (representing the position, as well as the opposition), CEC and NGOs monitoring the elections, caused increase in the level of minority participation in the elections. At the same time, however, according to our assessment, these efforts are not enough. The record-weak interest of the local mass-media should be underlined in relation with the processes taking place in the pre-election period and on the Election Day in the regions with compact ethnic minority settlements.

“Multinational Georgia” recommends to all parties, interested in raising the level of minority participation in the elections, to pay more attention to raising awareness of minorities, studying their needs, as well as working everyday with them, however, not only in the pre-election period. We also think it necessary to consolidate the efforts of the civil society to introduce respective amendment into the Election Code, including various control mechanisms over the voting process and guarantees for involving vulnerable groups. We are confident that such approach is extremely important for the development of integration processes in our society and strengthening the image of the state at the international scene.

We also announce a campaign on post-election monitoring in the regions through continuous functioning of our media-centres, as well as working on the problem control related to the voter lists.