



საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია

2021 წლის ადგილობრივი თვითმმართველობის არჩევნების კენჭისყრისა და ხმების დათვლის პროცესის შეფასება

EVALUATION OF 2021 SELF-GOVERNMENT ELECTION OBSERVATION OF THE POLLING AND VOTE COUNTING PROSESS.

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association within the framework of the Short-term Observation (STO) Mission provides the public with information about the events happening during the polling and the counting of votes. Based on the information collected by the GYLA's observers, we address the issues related to the closing of polling stations and the beginning of the vote counting, as well as the tendencies observed in and around the polling stations in the second part of Election Day.

According to GYLA, procedural irregularities were observed at the various stage of the Election Day. The tense atmosphere in a number of polling stations during the day may have affected both the behavior of voters and the monitoring of the process itself.

In particular, the following problems were identified during the Election Day:

- Control over the will of the voters (throughout the day, nearby territories of some polling stations were overcrowded, which created an atmosphere of shadowing during the voting and hindered the voters to freely express their will);
- The police officers who were called in order to ensure compliance with the regulation prohibiting the control over the will of voters within a 100-meter radius did not take appropriate measures, and in other cases the police did not even arrive;
- The secrecy of the ballot was violated in some precincts;
- Failure to comply with inking and voting regulations, more specifically, in some cases, there was double voting and/or voting without inking, as well as entry into the polling station and voting with inadmissible documents;
- Few cases of putting a ballot envelope in the ballot box by an unauthorized person;
- Breach of rules regulating voting with the mobile ballot box;
- Violations related to the integrity of the main ballot box and/or mobile ballot box;
- Several cases disregarding the rules restricting the agitation and calling off by commission members to vote for a specific candidate.

In some precincts, GYLA was deprived of an opportunity for monitoring.

Threats, facts of physical and verbal assaults against GYLA`s observers were reported. In several cases, GYLA`s observers were not allowed to take photos/videos as well as to submit the complaint. Six of GYLA`s observers were expelled from polling stations, and in one instance the observer of GYLA faced such pressure, that she/he had to leave. In Batumi #66 precinct, the chairman of the commission did not allow GYLA`s observer to record a video during the observation of the vote counting. On another occasion, a GYLA observer was confronted by representatives of other monitoring organizations at the polling station, both in the first half of the day and after the closure of the polling station. In Telavi #54 precinct, observers of GYLA and Transparency International were threatened with a beating by an observer of another organization. GYLA reported this incident to law enforcement officials to prevent an imminent threat.

The facts of violating election regulations were revealed after the closure of polling stations too

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. In several cases, GYLA`s observers identified infringement of rules concerning casting ballots by counters and counting of votes. On several occasions, observers of GYLA submitted complaints about the failure of commission members to fulfill their assigned functions properly, since they left the place several times during the counting. At District Election Commissions, a tendency of receiving unsealed Election Day record books and ballots from precincts was revealed.

It should be noted that the counting of votes in large cities took a particularly long time. In addition to that, the commissions could not manage to prepare summary protocols in time.

GYLA continues to monitor the post-election period (to examine the summary protocols of the polling stations prepared by precinct election commissions and to observe the process of summarizing the results in the higher election commissions). The organization plans to publish a final report assessing both the pre-election period and the Election Day.

On Election Day, considering the identified violations, GYLA`s observers had filed and written about 130 complaints and remarks throughout the day.

Short-Term Observation (STO) Mission of Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) on Election Day

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association Short-Term Observation (STO) Mission on October 2 Local Self-Government Elections consists of 350 observers in distinct and precinct election commissions in 10 municipalities of 8 regions across the country.

On Election Day GYLA operates a hotline number for the citizens which enables them to receive legal consultations as well as any information regarding electoral procedures, violations on the polling day, and the ways of responding to them.

The hotline number is: 577 36 15 20

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GYLA will hold three press conferences regarding the process of Election Day observation at the NGO Media Center during the day. The press conferences will be held at 11:00, 16:00, and 21:00. On October 3, GYLA will finalize its observation findings at 12 PM.

GYLA's monitoring mission on the voting day of the Local-self Government elections was made possible with the funding of the British Embassy. The opinions expressed in the statement are those of the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association and its content may not express the views of the donor organization.