



Nongovernmental Organizations Are Calling on Political Parties To Resolve Crisis Through Dialogue

Georgian citizens elected the Georgian Parliament under a new proportional system on 31 October 2020. The adoption of a predominantly proportional electoral system was made possible by years-long struggle of the public. It created conditions where the entry of new and relatively small political parties into the Parliament could have made the legislature more diverse, ended political polarization, and enhanced the effectiveness of the Georgian Parliament □ oversight of the Government, facilitating strengthening of democratic institutions. Despite the pandemic, 1,970,540 voters went to the polling stations on 31 October, which was a figure unseen since the 2012 elections and amounted to a remarkable turnout.

Unfortunately, both the electoral campaign as well as the election day and the vote count took place against the backdrop of numerous irregularities. During the electoral campaign, the line separating the government from the ruling party effectively

disappeared. There were multiple cases of misuse of administrative resources. The activities of the law enforcement agencies showed signs of likely political influence which affected the investigation of electoral violations and also led to the launch of politically motivated investigations. The so-called [REDACTED] case A is a clear example of this, as the authorities imprisoned two innocent individuals in order to achieve political gains and discredit their opponents.

The election day was marked by a large number of incidents involving attacks on journalists and representatives of monitoring organizations, voter bribing, and confrontation outside the polling station. Serious problems included inaccuracies in the vote tally protocols -- specifically, a high rate of imbalance unseen in the last few elections, corrections, and the filling out of corrected protocols in an opaque manner and without unbiased review. Against the backdrop of these problems, the unfounded refusal by the district electoral commissions to uphold the complaints requesting ballot recounts and a number of further circumstances have raised questions among a large part of the public regarding the trustworthiness and the legitimacy of election results. Due to these circumstances, the opposition has refused to take part in the second round of elections and has unanimously decided to boycott the future parliament. The action of the law enforcers against the demonstrators gathered in front of the Central Election Commission on the night of November 8 could not withstand any criticism and aggravated the current situation.

Although the 31 October 2020 parliamentary elections were a clear setback for Georgia and the worst elections held under the Georgian Dream government, we believe that there is still a chance to find a way out of the political impasse through dialogue.

We call on both the ruling party and the opposition parties to start talks, inter alia through the international community [REDACTED] mediation, in order to resolve the crisis which the country faces.

In order to preserve stability in Georgia, it is important for the politicians to resolve at the negotiating table the questions of recounting the ballots in the problematic precincts based on specific criteria and of the fair conduct of the runoffs. It is important for each party to do its best to help the country avoid a most serious crisis which would be further aggravated by the rising pandemic and economic recession. We are convinced that this effort is necessary and that it is what the country [REDACTED]

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interests require. Everything must be done to ensure that our country's development is not hindered at this difficult time.

Transparency International Georgia (TI)

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED)