



NGOs React to the Prime Minister's Announcement about Special Electoral Precincts

We issue this statement in reaction to the announcement made by the Prime Minister of Georgia during his meeting with the inter-faction group of the non-parliamentary opposition, according to which a political decision to abolish the so-called “special precincts” has been made.

For the sake of clarity we'd like to explain that abolishment of special electoral precincts as proposed by the government is substantially inadequate to resolve the long-standing problem of military voting effectively. A draft of amendments has been introduced by the Ministry of Defense within a task force established by the initiative of the inter-agency commission for fair elections. According to the draft, military workers will still be able to participate in majoritarian elections as well as in Mayoral/Gamgebeli elections, irrespective of their civilian place of registration, which is exactly what creates an opportunity to increase number of voters artificially and manipulate military votes in favor of the ruling political force in the first place. This raises suspicions about lack of free and competitive election environment and jeopardizes reputation and prestige of Georgian armed forces. In light of the

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foregoing, we believe that the authorities should demonstrate their political will to make substantial changes to resolve the long-standing problem. Similar to other voters, military voters should be able to participate in majoritarian elections and Mayoral/Gamgebeli elections only when their place of service and their civilian place of registration are within the boundaries of the same electoral district.

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy

Transparency International – Georgia

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association