

# NEWSLETTER

## Georgian Elections 2017: Final Newsletter #7

The Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA) monitored the local self-government elections of 2017 through its head office in Tbilisi and regional offices in eight regions of Georgia: Adjara, Guria, Imereti, Shida Kartli, Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, and Samegrelo.

The GYLA monitored the response of law enforcement agencies to **election-related crimes during the local self-government elections of 2017:**

- We have **identified a high number of incidents involving damage or destruction of property;**

- As in the 2016 parliamentary elections, the problems **identified** in the elections of 2017 included the **practice of the so-called pre-investigation inspections:** we have **not identified any cases where the so-called pre-investigation inspection ended with launching an investigation,** which deepens doubts that such inspections are intended for refraining from launching investigations and for excluding alleged cases of crimes from statistics;

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- We have **not identified any alleged crimes with a political discriminatory motive**;

We should give a **positive assessment to** the fact that the Ministry of Internal Affairs was mobilized and took preventive measures on the polling day and the order of the MIA, which instructed police officers to film a video in the case of an incident.

The examination of **electoral disputes** has mainly revealed that although election administrations and courts confirmed violations of the electoral legislation, they failed to grant complaints concerning invalidation of summary protocols and recounting of precinct results, arguing that the violations had not exerted substantial influence on the polling results, and only limited themselves to imposing disciplinary liability. The decrees of election administrations did not contain appropriate justification, and circumstances important for the case had not been properly investigated/assessed.

The complaints filed by the GYLA's observers:

- processing of personal information of voters by representatives of electoral subjects;
- inappropriate exercise of rights and violations of lot-casting procedures by members of precinct election commissions (PECs);
- violations related to polling procedures;
- restriction of observers' rights;
- Violations related to vote count and summarization of polling results.

We identified the following violations when assessing the degree of **inclusiveness of the electoral environment**:

- Various actors used hate speech against nominated women candidates;
- The polling places were not properly adapted, which interrupted the voting

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procedure for voters with disabilities;

- Despite the code of conduct and ethics developed by the Election Administration, we identified a number of violations by members of PECs, which were manifested in remarks and comments addressed to voters with disabilities;

- The language barrier was one of the major challenges that ethnic minorities faced in exercising their political rights.

Please see a full version of this final Newsletter #7 (June-November 2017) in the attached PDF document.