



The Ruling Coalition Ignored Vital Recommendations about the Election System and Retained Unjust Election System

We, Transparency International Georgia, the Georgian Young Lawyers Association and the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy, believe that the amendments proposed to the Inter-factional Working Group by the ruling party are not enough to create a fair voting system for the upcoming municipal elections.

We regret that the Inter-factional Working Group did not view reform of the electoral system as a priority to ensure fair and equal elections.

The current electoral system has been criticized by NGOs, political parties and international organizations for the past years, namely they have highlighted the following problems:

- City council mandates are not accurately reflected by the number of votes cast;
- Many votes are effectively wasted because a candidate who lacks the support of a majority is able to win an election;
- It does not guarantee the principle of equality – districts of differing sizes have an equal amount of seats in local councils;
- It gives an unfair advantage to the ruling party;

As the upcoming municipal elections are now only a few months away we proposed recommendations to the Inter-factional group which could still be implemented in time. Namely, **a 50% vote threshold for the election of mayors and municipal**

governors and introduction of multi-mandate election districts for majoritarian representatives in local councils.

These minimal changes would have at least been a step forward in improving the election system and were supported by number of NGOs and political parties who together submitted a joint petition to remedy these problems.

Prior to the 2012 parliamentary elections these reforms were demanded by the opposition — the current ruling coalition.

Notwithstanding our recommendations, the ruling coalition within the Inter-factional Working Group has not implemented a single one of our recommendations. Nor have they presented any viable argument to justify their refusal. We consider that the amendments proposed by the ruling coalition are insufficient to eliminate the current problems. Moreover the proposed amendments introduce different vote thresholds between the election of mayor and the municipal governor. Furthermore, the Inter-factional Working Group proposes to remove an existing provision allowing initiative groups to nominate independent mayor/governor candidate, which is a clear violation of international election standards.

We regret that the work of the Inter-factional Working Group has been a formality and that the ruling coalition refuses to consider the proposals of other members of the working group. We believe that proposed amendments made by the ruling coalition are merely superficial and do not constitute an attempt to establish a fair electoral system in Georgia.