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This Affects You Too Campaign Calls for Political Dialogue and Agreement among Political Parties

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This Affects You Too campaign would like to comment on the recent initiative about rules of conduct of political parties during the election period. We believe that developments related to electoral environment have taken an alarming turn recently, which endangers carrying out of electoral process in a peaceful and fair environment. Both political parties and the authorities are responsible for defusing of existing

tensions and building public confidence towards the process.

We deem an agreement between the political parties necessary for a fair, competitive and peaceful electoral process. But it is important that principles of an agreement are not dictated by only a single political force but rather, represents a genuine accord between the parties.

We believe that principles proposed by the ruling party-party are insufficient for the electoral environment to improve meaningfully. It is necessary that both the authorities and the political parties to assume more responsibility and agree on other election environment-related issues.

As non-governmental organizations monitoring elections, we believe that it is important for all parties participating in the election processes to agree on the following principles:

Political parties should

- not allow aggressive and destructive actions by their activists or encouraging such actions; ensure that their activists conduct campaigns in frames of the political ethics and take necessary measures against violations of this rule;
- inform public and relevant agencies in advance about campaign events;
- not allow attempts to discredit and meddle in the work of unbiased observer organizations;
- not engage in vote-buying and abide by applicable legislative requirements;
- not misuse administrative resources, including through misuse of budgetary resources, use of public service employees and power concentrated in state agencies’
- promote political culture, focus on thematic political debates as much as possible, in order to allow informed choice for the public;
- not encourage violence and aggression on the election day, including through mobilization of supporters, which may potentially lead to disorders and destabilization on the voting day;
- provide equal conditions for the work of journalists during campaign events and

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not allow their harassment or hindering of their work;

- not to misuse media outlets for campaign purposes or for misinforming public; promote defusing tensions and confrontation among representatives of various media outlets;

Authorities should

- act solely in line with laws and in full compliance with the principle of political neutrality;
- ensure equal and fair treatment of all political entities;
- not allow selective application of justice and discriminating approach;
- the State Audit Office should implement its duties in manner that will not cause discriminatory restriction of finances of individual political parties;
- State Audit Office and investigative authorities should focus more on prevention of offenses rather than punishment;
- State Audit Office should facilitate observance of law by the political parties including through having consultations in advance, especially in matters related to funding;
- Not allow any attempts to hinder journalistic work; provide equal conditions for the work of all registered journalists at state and municipal agencies and public events;
- through all the legal means available, provide public access to diverse sources of information, which also involves unrestricted access to various television channels on the election day and after elections.

Being guided by public and state interests, having realized necessity to hold free and fair elections, we deem it important that agreement on said issues is reached in a timely manner and with maximum involvement of stakeholders.

We would like to express our readiness to promote dialogue among political parties on noted issues.

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