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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, 12 December 2003

**RUSSIAN DOMESTIC MONITORS SAY ELECTION VIOLATIONS CALL VOTE
TABULATION PROCESS INTO QUESTION**

MOSCOW – The VOICE Association, an independent, non-partisan election monitoring group, today suggested that errors in vote tabulation and vote counting call into question the entire election process. This belief is based on the observations of the organization's 4,500 monitors throughout 30 regions of the country, covering 2/3 of the population, as well as a parallel vote tabulation in 20 districts. VOICE Executive Director Lilia Shibanova cited the following concerns:

- 1) A high percentage of the protocols containing official results from polling stations are error-filled, to the point of being useless for tabulation purposes. These protocols do not accurately reflect votes cast or voter turnout.

Background

VOICE has gathered protocols so far from approximately 2200 polling stations in 20 districts. Over 10% of those protocols contain major errors of calculation, in many cases meaning the figures did not add up to the results listed. Therefore, at least 10% of the results were based on incorrect data.

The Central Election Commission's (CEC) electoral tabulation computer programming, based on international vote counting standards, and hailed by the CEC as a safeguard against error-filled protocols, is designed to identify and reject results from all protocols with errors like those discovered by VOICE. According to Russia's electoral laws, upon rejection by the computer, the protocols must be returned to the polling stations and recounted, in the presence of observers. Despite requests to be included in the process, VOICE was not informed of any recounts, and therefore, is unable to determine in what ways the protocols with errors were fixed. There is no public record of changes made and, despite requests to do so by VOICE, the electoral commissions so far have not produced these protocols for viewing.

Currently, VOICE has no information on the protocols from areas not monitored by the organization. However, it is in the process of reaching out to other organizations in order to obtain this information.

- 2) Concerns about error-filled protocols are in addition to previous violations noted by VOICE on election-day itself. These violations deal with the way in which ballots were counted, discrepancies between the number of individuals who entered polling stations and the number of ballots found in the ballot box, and the number of "mobile voters" who actually voted compared to the number of ballots found in the mobile boxes. VOICE has received no information on how or whether the electoral commissions have examined its complaints.

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