



International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy

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Statement on the Election of Ajara Supreme Council

Batumi, 21 June, 2004 – For the elections of the Supreme Council of Ajarian Autonomous Republic the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) deployed its observers to 286 precinct election commissions of the region. Besides, the organization's representatives observed the election procedures at the district and supreme election commissions. The organization would like to thank its domestic observers, who monitored the elections on volunteer basis and supported the fair conduct of the elections.

Based on the information provided by the observers, ISFED states that the election in Ajara was held and the voters played an important role in its conduct. High turnout and determination of the whole society were the premises for the Supreme Council of the autonomous republic to be elected according to the will expressed by the people.

Although, it should be noted that certain violations were still observed on Election Day, which were mainly caused by the too limited timeframes defined for administering the elections. The low level of training of the precinct election commissions and their non-competence in the election procedures were especially obvious. The special emphasis should be made on the fact that some of the violations taking place at the precincts were caused by the wrong instructions coming from the District Election Commissions.

Because of the abovementioned reasons in all districts of the region the following procedures were violated or not implemented at all: division of the functions among election commission members by lottery; filling out the control sheets; voting by mobile ballot box; stamping the ballot papers and special envelopes; filling out demonstration protocols; requesting IDs before giving the ballots to voters; in certain cases – marking procedures.

Non-competence of the election commissions was most apparent during the vote count.

The rules of packing the election documentation and filling out precinct protocols were not followed. In most of the cases the precinct election commissions were not able to write elections results in the official protocols in a required manner and needed outside help. But the election administrations were ready to accept the suggestions and fix the mistakes.

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy considers that it is important to conduct the next election procedures according to the law in order to draw a real picture for assessing the level of fairness of the Ajara Supreme Council elections. At this stage a special attention should be put on rectifying the revealed violations by providing legal reaction to the observers' complaints so that the final election results reflect the will of the population of Ajarian Autonomous Republic.

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