

**NDI Post-Election Statement on
June 1 Macedonia Parliamentary Elections**

Macedonia held parliamentary elections on June 1 after a vigorously contested campaign. International and domestic nonpartisan observers concluded that the elections were generally well administered. However, incidents of politically motivated violence—leading in one case to the death of an individual and serious injury to others—along with other instances of voter intimidation, ballot box stuffing, proxy voting, and the premature closing of polling stations, unfortunately marred the conduct of the elections in two of the country’s six election districts.

An election process that is peaceful, fair, secure, and transparent is central to democracy. As testament to this, the leaders of 36 registered political parties signed a Code of Conduct for Free and Fair Elections, drafted and sponsored by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), in a public ceremony on April 8. The signatories committed their parties to abstain from violence, respect voter rights, and monitor their campaigns and redress transgressions. An ensuing, nationwide media campaign publicizing the code under the motto “*We Can And We Must!*”, organized by NDI in cooperation with the MOST civic organization and the Macedonia Women’s Lobby, underscored the public’s desire for a fair electoral campaign and a peaceful election day.

NDI is very alarmed by the violence and irregularities that have occurred. The Institute is nevertheless pleased that the Code of Conduct and the associated public outreach campaign have raised public awareness of democratic election conduct. NDI notes that a large majority of citizens cast their vote without incident.

Macedonia’s political parties—particularly those implicated in election-related misconduct--have a responsibility to condemn, publicly and unambiguously, any and all acts of election-related violence and other violations of the election law and of the Code of Conduct that they have signed. They have the responsibility to launch internal investigations to determine the causes of these incidents and to cooperate fully with law enforcement agencies. They must rededicate themselves to adhere to the election law and abide by the Code of Conduct with regard to planned re-votes in polling stations where the election has been compromised, as observed by international and domestic monitors and as determined by the State Electoral Commission. They must commit their activists to contribute to a proper, peaceful, and non-intimidating environment at polling stations.

No voter should be subject to fear, intimidation, or improper conduct in exercising his or her franchise and in expressing freely his or her political will. No elected member of parliament should take his or her seat in the legislature based on a compromised electoral process that places the outcome in doubt. All citizens of Macedonia deserve an election process that upholds their rights, respects their decisions, and merits their trust.