



FINAL REPORT OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE ON GEORGIA'S OCTOBER 2016 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

November 14, 2016

SUMMARY

Georgia's October 2016 parliamentary elections were characterized by an open political environment, a competitive campaign, overall results that were validated by credible observers, and some underlying problems that need concerted attention.

Georgians had the freedom to form and join political parties. Parties and candidates gained access to the ballot without facing unreasonable restrictions or discrimination. They were able to campaign throughout the country, were free to express their messages to the public, and had adequate opportunities to do so, particularly given Georgia's vibrant and pluralistic media environment. Citizens were able to exercise their voting rights freely. These are commendable credentials.

Yet the elections highlighted some problems. The most pressing of these were incidents of violence and intimidation that occurred throughout the process; concerns about the qualifications, neutrality, and competence of some polling station commissioners; and questions about the impartiality and consistency of adjudication measures. In addition, the elections underscored shortcomings related to the legal framework, parties' campaign strategies, election observation, campaign financing and the misuse of administrative resources, and the underrepresentation of women and minority groups. Concerted efforts to address these issues now would help to ensure that Georgians have full confidence in future elections. Building trust in electoral integrity on all sides should be a priority for the new parliament and government, as well as all parties and civil society.

As in the wake of any democratic election, it now becomes important for the parliament and new government to strive to represent all citizens, including those who did not vote for the majority party, and to seek to include a wide range of views in its decisionmaking. The voices of opposition parties, both within and outside the parliament, independent media, and civil society groups should be respected and their rights should be defended.

BACKGROUND

The basic elements for a credible process were in place before the first round of voting. Pluralism is an established feature of the political and civic landscape in Georgia. Fundamental freedoms of expression, assembly, and association are largely respected. The media environment is the most free and diverse in the region, although it is politicized and one of the most popular media outlets is under legal threat. Civil society organizations play an active role in political life. Competitive multiparty elections are now routine. It is notable that most of the NGO, political party, and diplomatic and international representatives, with the exception of those from the United National Movement (UNM), characterized the political environment as improved since the previous parliamentary elections in 2012. UNM representatives, for their part, assessed that the environment had worsened, describing the imprisonment of their representatives, unpunished acts of violence and shootings, and an uneven playing field. These contrasting views reflect, in part, the vastly different perspectives and experiences of the two major parties. The ongoing rivalry between the two groups dominated the pre-election environment.

NDI public opinion research shows that Georgians are dissatisfied with this polarized political atmosphere, which distracts from the pressing issues they would like to see addressed. Confidence in political institutions, which are struggling to deliver in an evolving environment, is fragile. Most Georgians do not think the political parties are making changes that matter to them. They feel neglected by their elected representatives, particularly at the national level. Many voters were undecided about how to cast their ballots going into the campaign, and turnout was historically low, suggesting a degree of discontent with the choices presented.

The parliamentary elections included a first round on October 8, rerun elections on October 22 in four majoritarian districts that had been annulled, and runoffs on October 30 in 50 districts where no candidate had received more than 50 percent of the vote in the first round. According to the Central Election Commission's (CEC's) preliminary results, the Georgian Dream (GD) party won 115 seats, the United National Movement party won 27, and the Patriot's Alliance party won six. One seat was won by a candidate from the Industrialists' party and another by an independent.

The National Democratic Institute offers this final report in the spirit of international cooperation and respect for Georgians' democratic aspirations. The report is the culmination of an observation effort that included a pre-election assessment mission, which issued a [statement](#) on June 17; a 23-member international election observation delegation, which issued a [statement](#) on October 9; and team of long-term analysts who observed the process from August through early November and contributed to the reporting process. The Institute also issued a [statement of recommendations](#) ahead of the runoffs on October 21. The findings in this report are also informed by nonpartisan citizen monitoring groups, including the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), the Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA), and

Transparency International-Georgia (TI), with which NDI has cooperated throughout the process.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Georgia's October 2016 parliamentary elections were conducted in an open political environment in which parties were able to deliver their messages and voters were able to make informed decisions. The campaign was competitive. According to ISFED, in the vast majority of polling stations, voting proceeded in a lawful manner. ISFED conducted parallel vote tabulations (PVTs), which are a statistically-based method for evaluating the quality of election day processes and verifying official results. The ISFED PVTs validated the overall official results for these elections.

Some significant problems arose, however, which may have impacted voters' choices before they cast their ballots. These did not affect the overall legitimacy of the elections, but they provided grounds for questioning of some aspects of the process.

Georgia is scheduled to hold local elections in 2017 and a presidential election in 2018. With that in mind, this report does not seek to provide a comprehensive summary of the electoral process, but rather aims to draw attention to a set of recommendations that, if pursued, could contribute to greater public confidence in the approaching elections.

Violence and Intimidation

Recommendations:

- Those who have violated laws should be charged and prosecuted proportionately, consistently, and expeditiously to ensure a deterrent effect for future elections.
- The CEC and Ministry of Internal Affairs should reinforce training on electoral security for law enforcement personnel, and police should be prepared to deploy to areas and situations at high risk for violence to defuse tensions in future elections.
- Complaints about slow or inadequate responses by police on election day should be analyzed for purposes of improving responsiveness in the future.
- Measures should be considered to create an environment around polling stations that is respectful of citizens' right to assembly while minimizing opportunities for intimidation or disruptions.
- Parties should adopt internal accountability measures and sanctions for members found to have participated in violence and intimidation.
- Parties should consider multi-party codes of conduct for candidates and activists in future.
- The rights of credible independent observers to report honestly about their findings should be respected.

Violence was not widespread in these elections, but several serious incidents occurred. These included, among others, the explosion of a UNM MP's car in downtown Tbilisi on October 4; an October 2 shooting incident at an independent candidate's campaign event, in which two members of the candidate's team were injured; and an assault in Didinedzi village on Oct 1 in which GD and UNM activists were injured. In the pre-election period, the Inter-Agency Commission on Free and Fair Elections (IACFF)¹ reported that the Prosecutor's office was investigating 26 cases of beatings. On October 8, in two precincts in Zugdidi and one in Marneuli, the counting process was disrupted or terminated by outside activists, including the storming of polling stations, damaging of ballot boxes and private property, and assaults on international observers. Clashes occurred at some polling stations, spurred in part by the release of conflicting exit polls. ISFED reported two cases of physical violence between October 9 and 27.² On runoff day on October 30, fighting broke out in Gori between UNM and GD supporters, resulting in severe injuries to a UNM supporter. A PEC official allegedly physically assaulted a UNM observer in Marneuli.

ISFED reported 28 cases of politically-motivated intimidation in the pre-election period and eight incidents between the first round and runoffs.³ In addition, illegally-obtained recordings of politicians, media representatives, and other public figures contributed to a hostile pre-election environment for candidates.⁴ UNM reported more than 50 cases of intimidation of their activists and supporters over the course of the elections. Monitoring groups, including the Georgian Young Lawyer's Association (GYLA), also described civil servants being instructed to vote for GD by marking the party's number in a specific way, presumably to keep track of such voters. GD has denied this allegation. NDI delegates and observers from Transparency International (TI) and GYLA reported the presence of party coordinators and other individuals outside of many polling stations in competitive districts, creating an atmosphere that appeared intimidating to some voters.⁵ TI also noted widespread, but unconfirmed, reports of State Security Service representatives and other law enforcement authorities harassing voters, activists, and candidates

¹ The Inter-Agency Commission for Free and Fair Elections is mechanism created through the election code to prevent and respond to reports of electoral violations by public servants. The IACFF also discusses complaints regarding other electoral violations, such as violence and intimidation.

² The International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy, "[ISFED: Pre-Election Monitoring of the Run-Offs of October 8, 2016 Parliamentary Elections Interim Report](#)," October 28, 2016

³ The International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy, "[ISFED: Violations of the Electoral Legislation Became Frequent](#)," October 3, 2016; "[Instances of Harassment/Intimidation and Campaign Interference in ISFED's Third Interim Report](#)," September 9, 2016; "[Vote Buying and Misuse of Administrative Resources in the Pre-Election Campaign ISFED 2nd Report](#)," August 23, 2016; and "[Instances of Harassment/Intimidation, Violence and Vote Buying in ISFED's 1st Interim Report](#)," July 25, 2016.

⁴ [This Affects You Too Campaign Responds to Covertly Recorded Telephone Conversations](#)

⁵ <https://gyla.ge/ge/post/2016-tslis-8-oqtombris-saparlamento-archevnebis-kentchisyris-dghis-shefaseba>

and supporters of some political parties.⁶ Further, throughout the election period, observers heard numerous complaints about threats of job dismissals and cuts to social benefits for supporting opposition parties, although these cases are difficult to substantiate.

Several independent monitoring organizations reported that some parties and media outlets responded to their findings with hostile and intimidating statements as well as threats to withhold future cooperation.

Election Administration

Recommendations:

- The CEC and relevant authorities should respond to all legitimate grievances, engage in dialogue with all complainants, and ensure transparency of all its work to build confidence in the process.
- To minimize errors, the parliament and CEC should consider measures to streamline counting, tabulation, and other commission procedures, while maintaining the transparency and verifiability of the processes.
- The CEC should consider clarifying the qualifications and selection procedures for professional district and precinct election commissioners, including standards for impartiality, prioritizing those who have previous experience.
- The CEC should consider publishing results in machine-readable formats to ease access to and analysis of the elections results.
- The parliament in conjunction with the CEC should work to fill the existing gaps in the electoral legislation including those related to candidate registration, campaigning requirements, such as use of social media, and irregularities related to imbalances on the protocols.

NDI and other international and domestic observer groups found the work of the Central Election Commission (CEC) and district-level commissions (DECs) to be professional. The CEC conducted multiple rounds of training for commissioners and extensive voter and civic education efforts. Most commissioners at all levels worked diligently throughout the election cycle. Following the first round of elections, the CEC responded constructively to concerns raised by parties and observers. It conducted additional training for precinct election commission (PEC) leaders. Also, during the runoffs, the CEC published the summary protocols immediately after receiving them, as required by law, in response to criticism from monitoring groups about delays during the first round. These were welcome corrections.

At the same time, observers and opposition parties called into question the qualifications, impartiality, and competence of some members of the PECs. The election law requires PECs to

⁶ Transparency International, “Misuse of Administrative Resources During Electoral Processes 2016,” September 30, 2016

have seven “partisan” members, who are designated by parties, and six “professional” members, who are meant to be nonpartisan. Observers raised questions about the process some DEC used for selecting professional members, claiming that in some districts it seemed to be based on lists of predetermined winners rather than open elections among all nominated candidates. Further, reviews of some professional PEC members’ backgrounds revealed that they had party roles in their recent history.⁷

NDI and other observers recorded numerous procedural problems at PECs, particularly related to the counting and completion of summary protocols, during the October 8, 22, and 30 elections. These included protocols with irregularities or imbalances, such as more ballots than voters or more voters than ballots, and other errors. In response to these complaints, the CEC provided refresher trainings for PEC leaders and also appointed 201 representatives to provide support at PECs for the runoffs. However, many precinct commissioners remained inadequately prepared to fulfill their responsibilities. In addition to procedural problems, other violations were noted, including duplicate voting,⁸ vote buying,⁹ voter invitation cards included with cast ballots,¹⁰ allegations of ballot box stuffing, and other irregularities. Although these problems did not appear systematic, they created grounds for criticism and debate about the credibility of the process and results.

Election administrators received more than 1,000 requests for recounts or annulment of results or summary protocols, disciplinary measures, or administrative violation protocols. Election administrators annulled results in 10 polling stations and called for reruns in four. Yet many requests for recounts or annulments due to imbalances in protocols and high numbers of invalid ballots were rejected, with the election administration noting that the incidents cited would not have a significant impact on the results. Some observers expressed the view that a broader interpretation of the regulations and a willingness to pursue more comprehensive investigations would have contributed to greater confidence in the results and also provided data for making improvements in the future. Given the small margins by which some mandates were determined in these elections, exceptional levels of scrutiny, transparency, and consistency were warranted to promote public confidence.

⁷ International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy, “[Pre-Election Monitoring of October 8 2016 Parliamentary Elections Third Interim Report](#),” September 1, 2016 and “[Statement of ISFED about Ongoing Competition for Selection of Electoral Commission Members](#),” August 21, 2016.

⁸ GYLA tracked 75 cases of duplicate voting, 70 attempted and five successful.

⁹ ISFED: <http://www.isfed.ge/main/1165/eng/>, <http://www.isfed.ge/main/1151/eng/>, <http://www.isfed.ge/main/1147/eng/>, <http://www.isfed.ge/main/1131/eng/>, <http://www.isfed.ge/main/1118/eng/>, <http://www.isfed.ge/main/1100/eng/>

¹⁰ GYLA, “[Assessment of the polling day of the second round of the parliamentary elections](#),” October 31, 2016.

Law Enforcement and Adjudication of Violations

Recommendations:

- Legal bodies (administrative and judicial) receiving electoral complaints should act in a timely, independent, and impartial manner and provide effective redress where warranted.
- The Inter-Agency Commission on Free and Fair Elections (IACFF) should clearly define and publicize its mandate and procedures, consider a mechanism for rapid responses to disruptions or incidents of violence, and adopt a transparent method of investigation.
- Parties and candidates with grievances about the conduct of the October 8 elections should document their complaints and lodge them with the appropriate body in order to peacefully seek redress.

There were positive developments over the course of the election cycle with regard to law enforcement and electoral security, yet concerns remain about the consistency and impartiality of adjudication measures. The IACFF issued recommendations urging parties to refrain from appearing at opponents' activities or interfering with their campaign materials. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) issued several orders that, combined, consolidated police forces into territorial groups, allowing for better coordination, promoted monitoring and risk assessments of potentially violent situations, and clarified the grounds for using police measures from the completion of voting until the end of the counting process.¹¹ On September 20 the MIA and the CEC signed a memorandum of understanding focused on ensuring that voting would take place in a safe and free environment. The MIA and CEC also provided electoral security training to law enforcement personnel for the first time in Georgia's history. These were constructive initiatives.

Throughout the election cycle, however, opposition parties and observer groups described frequently and consistently delayed investigations, selective pursuit of cases, inconsistent use of pretrial detention, pressure on judges, and uneven application of sanctions. In the cases of violence against UNM leaders in Khortskeli during the May by-elections, judicial proceedings continue to be delayed with court dates repeatedly postponed. Few charges have been filed in connection with incidents on October 8, including disruptions and damages in Jihashkari and Kutaisi. A case filed by an international observer, represented by GYLA, who was attacked on election day, is still pending. The October 8 incidents in Zugdidi and Marneuli are being investigated under similar articles of the criminal code on interference in election process, although Zugdidi charges are more severe as they also include violent acts. However, three GD supporters were arrested in relation to the Zugdidi incident, with one being released on bail, while six UNM supporters were arrested and placed in pretrial detention in relation to the incident in Marneuli, leaving the impression to some, particularly in the opposition, of uneven

¹¹ Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, Order No. 512, September 9, 2016; Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, Order No. 584, October 20, 2016

resolution. Observers and political parties also complained that police responses were slow or inadequate in some districts, particularly where opposition parties were competitive, despite requests for their intervention, including a complaint from the international observer in Jihashkari who said police were present but did not intervene when he was attacked. Confidence in future elections will depend on the police, prosecutors, and courts demonstrating that they can be relied upon to serve as a timely, impartial, and effective checks on abuses of power.

The IACFF was established specifically to prevent and respond to reports of electoral violations by public servants. In these elections, it provided a forum for stakeholders to convene and share information and it issued some constructive recommendations, as noted above. However, the potential of this body to serve as a confidence-building mechanism is constrained by unclear operating procedures and a lack of authority to enforce recommendations.

Legal Framework

Recommendation:

- The parliament should resume an inclusive and transparent process to reach agreement on electoral system reform.

Georgia's electoral system has been a topic of longstanding debate on the grounds that it favors the ruling party. Opposition parties criticized the mixed proportional-majoritarian system under the UNM government. More recently, opposition, non-parliamentary, and most ruling party coalition party members, along with a spectrum of NGOs, reached a consensus on transitioning from a mixed to a fully proportional system. Some compromises, included a phased transition, were considered. To date, however, these reform initiatives have not been successful. According to polls, public confidence in the single-mandate framework is low. The demands for change are motivated in part by a view that the formula for allocating seats creates disproportionality between the number of votes cast and the seats designated to parties. Georgia's mixed system allocates 77 seats through party lists in a national proportional system with a 5 percent threshold for representation; 73 seats are allocated from single-mandate constituencies with a 50 percent threshold. In these elections, due to relatively low turnout combined with the existing thresholds and allocation formulas, ballots from a minority of eligible voters translated into sizable majorities of proportional and majoritarian seats for one party.

Party Campaigns

Recommendations:

- Parties and candidates in future elections should outline and communicate clear platforms explaining their positive vision for social and economic reform; take advantage of any opportunities to participate in moderated public debates; and refrain from speech and conduct that denigrates public confidence in the political process.

Campaign activity was low throughout the pre-election and pre-runoff periods with most parties engaging in small-scale activities such as community meetings and door to door campaigning. Several parties laid out detailed electoral programs, but much of the campaign rhetoric focused on vilification of opponents or local government-related issues rather than on policy proposals. Further, some campaigns engaged in hate speech targeted at Turks, Muslims, and sexual minorities. Televised debates were held on national and regional channels, and several media outlets agreed that there had been more opportunities for party discourse than in previous campaigns. It was unfortunate, however, that some party leaders declined to participate in several important televised debates, which in turn prompted other parties to withdraw, depriving voters of an important opportunity to educate themselves about their electoral choices.

Observation

Recommendations:

- Election observers should be mindful of their rights and responsibilities as well as those of voters and roles of election administrators and refrain from interfering in legitimate electoral processes.
- The CEC should consider developing criteria for accreditation of NGOs that would allow access to all credible groups that agree to internationally-recommended principles for observation, but mitigate overcrowding and unprofessionalism in polling stations.

Representatives from all major political parties, nonpartisan citizen observer groups, and multiple international observation missions were present at polling stations across the country. In the first round, for example, the CEC and DEC's accredited 49,092 party and candidate observers; 5368 media representatives; almost 3000 nonpartisan monitors; and 1190 international observers. Citizen observation of the process is an important democratic practice and can provide critical oversight, safeguard the vote, and build confidence in the process. Across the country, however, NDI delegates, leading observer groups, and CEC leaders reported that some local observers, primarily party proxies, were interfering in processes that were lawfully the responsibility of election officials -- undermining their authority -- and failing to comply with standards for observation. In some cases monitors harassed voters, commissioners, and other observers, including one instance of a physical assault. In many cases, large numbers of observers were present at polling stations. NDI counted 38 domestic observers at the closing in a PEC in Akhaltsikhe. Some monitors who were credentialed as representatives of nonpartisan organizations could not name the organization they represented and instead identified themselves with political parties. According to the CEC, some of the NGOs requesting accreditation had formed and registered shortly before the elections, apparently for the sole purpose of observation, and dissolved immediately afterward. The crowding and interference contributed to an environment of confusion and, in some cases, intimidation. More rigorous standards for

vetting potential observer groups and greater clarity on the distinctions between the roles of observers and election officials would help to alleviate these concerns.

Campaign Finance and Use of Administrative Resources

Recommendations:

- Party leaders should ensure the transparency of campaign financial transactions, renounce the acceptance or use of private, corporate, or foreign funds that violate Georgia's campaign finance requirements, and cooperate fully with the State Audit Office.
- NGOs, journalists, and government agencies should monitor, to the extent possible, both reported and unreported flows of funding in the election campaign.
- Local administrative reforms, including stronger legal protection against dismissals of civil servants, should be considered to prevent politicized abuses.
- More rigorous measures should be considered to regulate the roles of state officials in electoral campaigns.
- The possibility of infringement of personal data privacy during the elections should be investigated.

A persistent concern in Georgian politics, under successive governments, has been the role of money in elections. Many of those with whom NDI met raised questions about the sources, scope, and manner in which funds flowed to campaigns. Opposition parties also reported businesses were reluctant to donate to them, allegedly due to fear of repercussions. The playing field was uneven with GD receiving 66 percent of all donations and outspending all other parties and candidates combined.¹² There is a longstanding history in Georgia of civil servants being requested to attend pro-government campaign events and facing pressure to vote for the government party. These elections were not an exception, with reports throughout the campaign and election of civil servants being requested to attend GD events and, later, to vote for GD. TI Georgia observed what it described as large-scale mobilization of state employees on behalf of GD campaign activities.¹³ While civil servants are permitted to campaign during non-work hours, a lack of distinction between the state and the governing party points to the need for further clarification of the parameters for campaigning by government officials and civil servants.

¹² According to data from the State Audit Office (SAO), GD received 66.3 percent (15.9 million Georgian Lari) of all donations to parties through September (a total of 24.9 million GEL). GD was followed by State for People (4.8 million GEL), Patriots' Alliance and UNM (1 million GEL each), and Free Democrats (421,690 GEL). All independent candidates combined received 1 million GEL in donations. Through September 20, GD had outspent all other parties and candidates combined (GD's expenditures were 13.5 million GEL compared to a total of 12 million GEL for all others).

¹³ Transparency International Georgia, "Misuse of Administrative Resources during Electoral Processes 2016," September 30, 2016

Inclusion

Recommendations:

- The pending bill on the introduction of mandatory gender quotas should be debated and brought to a vote.
- Political parties should recruit, train, and support a greater number of women and minorities for subsequent elections and further develop party infrastructures to support women and minorities and integrate issues of their particular concerns into party policy.

Women in Georgia were well represented among voters (51.1 percent), observers, and election administrators, demonstrating their commitment to and engagement in politics and elections. However, women were underrepresented as candidates, making up only 17 percent of majoritarian candidates and 37 percent of party list candidates. At this stage, it appears that only three parties and one bloc qualified for the financial incentive of a 30 percent increase in state funding for including three candidates of a different gender in every 10 names on their proportional lists, with Patriots' Alliance the only party to both qualify for the financial benefit and pass the threshold to hold seats in parliament. The overall number of women MPs did increase slightly, from 18 (12 percent) prior to the election to 24 (16 percent); however, fewer women majoritarian MPs were elected -- five in October as compared to seven in the previous parliament.

Georgia's ethnic minority communities were underrepresented across all aspects of the campaign. In the six majoritarian districts inhabited largely by ethnic minority communities, UNM nominated five ethnic minority candidates and GD three from ethnic minorities, though GD won all six districts. In terms of the election administration, representation of minorities in DECAs was not proportionate to the percentage of minorities in the districts' populations, although the PEC composition did appear more balanced. The CEC trained and provided materials to PEC members in minority languages and conducted voter education efforts for members of ethnic minority groups. These opportunities, however, did not appear to meet all needs as widespread confusion among both officials and voters regarding procedures was observed during the elections in minority communities.

The new parliament and government should give full consideration to mechanisms that in the future would deliver a parliament more representative of all Georgians, including women and minority groups.

LOOKING AHEAD

The 2016 campaign environment was in many ways more competitive than the 2012 elections, with 25 parties and election blocs participating, up from 16. In addition, 61 independent majoritarian candidates ran, compared to four in 2012. However, only three parties – GD, UNM,

and Patriots' Alliance -- cleared the proportional threshold and GD won all but two of the single mandate seats. GD will have a constitutional majority, with UNM as the main opposition voice in parliament. GD and UNM have found it difficult in the past to cooperate, even though their policy positions are close in some key issue areas. The temptations to resort to personal attacks and vitriol may be strong, which would be a distraction from the need for coordinated governance to meet Georgia's domestic and foreign challenges.

In the wake of the elections, the opposition is facing some disarray. Several small but previously influential parties, including the Free Democrats, Republicans, and State for People, have lost their leaders and splintered, and their future participation in politics and elections is uncertain. The Girchi party announced it will no longer function as a political party but rather as a social movement. UNM faced an internal debate over whether to boycott the parliament. Party leaders ultimately rejected the boycott, but the question revealed significant divisions within the organization. Georgia's diverse, multi-party political landscape has thus changed significantly. The range of views and policy positions in the legislature has narrowed and checks on the majority will be limited.

Turnout for these elections was relatively low at 51.63 percent on October 8, and 37.5 percent on October 30.¹⁴ In addition, as noted above, the electoral system's thresholds and formulas for allocating seats meant that ballots from minorities of eligible voters translated into majorities of proportional and majoritarian seats for one party. As a result, some Georgians may feel they are not represented in this parliament.

In this context of deep animosity among the leading parties and a dominant party with limited checks on its authority and a mandate from less than a majority of the electorate, political leaders will need to make extraordinary efforts to promote transparency, accountability, and inclusive policy making. This should include consultations with both parliamentary and non-parliamentary parties, as well as civil society and other stakeholders, to ensure that the full spectrum of Georgia's citizens is represented in decision making. This will be particularly important on critical national issues, such as constitutional reforms. In addition, measures to strengthen parliamentary oversight of the government, including improved enforcement of existing requirements, should be considered to ensure government responsiveness to parliamentary inquiries. Efforts by civil society groups and journalists to promote transparency and accountability and contribute to policymaking should be encouraged and defended.

¹⁴ <http://cesko.ge/res/docs/monacileqalebi.pdf>
<http://cesko.ge/res/docs/Aktivoba20.0030102016.pdf>

NDI'S OBSERVATION

Pre-Election Assessment Mission

The delegation included Sam Coppersmith, former member of the U.S. House of Representatives; Per Eklund, former EU ambassador to Georgia; Janusz Onyszkiewicz, former vice president of the European Parliament and Polish minister of defense; Michael Posner, professor at New York University's Stern School of Business and former assistant secretary for democracy, human rights and labor at the U.S. State Department; Laura Jewett, NDI regional director for Eurasia; and Laura Thornton, NDI senior resident country director in Georgia.

From June 13-17, the delegation held meetings in Tbilisi with candidates, political parties participating in the elections from across the political spectrum; members of the Central Election Commission, the State Audit Office, and the inter-party working group on electoral reform; the President; Speaker of Parliament; Prime Minister; Minister of Foreign Affairs, State Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration; representatives of the ministries of justice and internal affairs; domestic and international observer groups; members of parliament; media representatives; and representatives of the international and diplomatic communities.

Long-Term Analysts

Between August 2 and November 3, a team of three long-term election analysts visited approximately 65 districts and conducted more than 400 meetings with government and election officials, candidates and political party representatives, civil society organizations, media representatives, and international and diplomatic missions in Georgia. They also observed campaign events, citizen education initiatives, and trainings of election officials and law enforcement, as well as sessions of the CEC and the IACFF. Between October 28 and 31, the team was supplemented by four additional analysts, who were delegates in the international observation mission for the first round, for the runoffs.

International Observation Mission

NDI's delegation included observers from 11 countries and was led by Sam Gejdenson, former U.S. representative from Connecticut; Ted Kaufman, former U.S. senator from Delaware; Janusz Onyszkiewicz, former vice president of the European Parliament and Polish minister of defense; Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, Belgian minister of state and a former member of the European Parliament; Laura Jewett, NDI regional director for Eurasia; and Laura Thornton, director of NDI's office in Georgia. The 23-member NDI delegation arrived in Tbilisi on October 4 and held meetings with national political leaders, parliamentary candidates, election officials, senior government officials, representatives of nongovernmental organizations, the media, and the diplomatic community. On October 6, NDI observers deployed in teams to ten regions across

Georgia where they met with local government, election, political, and civic leaders. On election day, NDI observed voting and counting processes in polling stations across the country. The observers reported regularly on developments around the country and returned to Tbilisi to share their findings.

NDI's activities were conducted in accordance with Georgian law and the [Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation](#), which has been endorsed by 52 intergovernmental and international nongovernmental organizations worldwide.

NDI wishes to express its appreciation to the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which have funded this work and, along with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), have supported NDI democracy assistance programs in Georgia. In addition to the international observation activities, NDI supported the election monitoring efforts of ISFED.