



*May 31, 2010*

## **International Society for Fair Election and Democracy**

### **Preliminary statement on May 30 Self-government and Parliament by-elections of Georgia**

The International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy carried out Election Day monitoring of the May 30 Local Elections and Parliamentary by-elections of Georgia. The organization observed the voting process through **1100** PEC observers, **73** DEC observers, **73** mobile groups and **15** legal teams. At the same time the organization conducted qualitative and quantitative monitoring of Election Day.

Based on the findings of the ISFED observation mission, ISFED considers that the May 30 Local Elections can be considered valid as demonstrated by the high participation of Georgian citizens. The Election Administration and the Government demonstrated their will to conduct fair elections, during both the pre-election period and on Election Day. This positive trend is worth noting.

However, number of tendencies observed on the Election Day cast the shadow on positive assessment of the Election Day. These are:

- Wide-scale agitation by activists of electoral subjects in areas surrounding polling stations. It is hard to judge what the impact of the agitation was on the expression of voters' free will;
- Inadequate qualification of precinct level election administration employees and logistical problems (lack of materials, technical equipment out of order) did not add confidence in the electoral process;
- A number of significant violations were observed by ISFED observers, such as observers not allowed in the polling station, the pressure and intimidation of observers, voting with ID cards belonging to others, inflated numbers of voters in the supplemental list and more cast ballot papers than the number of signatures in the voters list. It should be noted, however, that according to ISFED's observation mission such facts were not wide spread.

**ISFED**

On the Election Day ISFED lodged **46 complaints**. The consideration of complaints is an essential element of the electoral process. As such, ISFED encourages all state institutions involved in elections to responsibly fulfill their duties and to fully and appropriately deliberate all complaints. This would further demonstrate the will of state institutions to conduct elections in a democratic and transparent manner.

ISFED will observe and report on how the election administration investigates and evaluates the complaints submitted on Election Day. ISFED believes that as soon as the results of the election are tabulated, it is imperative that political subjects and the election administration demonstrate their readiness and will to improve the legislative and political environment for future elections. This improved environment should guarantee each and every electoral subject with equal access to electoral opportunities, living up to not only the letter of international agreements, but also to their spirit.

We believe that it is necessary to:

- Continue to improve the Georgian Election Code with a special emphasis placed on the pre-election campaign and electoral agitation;
- Continue to improve the quality of the voters' list with continued engagement of political parties and non-governmental organizations in the process;
- Make important steps towards raising voters' awareness and education on electoral issues;
- Expand the timeframe for appointing elections to give time for all stakeholders to properly prepare;
- Carry out extensive activities to increase the qualifications and knowledge of election administration employees at the precinct and district levels.

**International Society for Fair Elections  
and Democracy**

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