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About GYLA's observation mission

The election campaign for the 2016 parliamentary elections officially started on June 8. The observation results presented in this information bulletin cover the period from June 8 to September 10, though, in some cases, we have also included information about developments before June 8 which are related to electoral processes.

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) observes the pre-election period through its head office in Tbilisi and eight regional offices in Adjara, Guria, Imereti, Shida Kartli, Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, and Samegrelo.

The observation aims to contribute to fair and transparent electoral processes and to ensuring the observance of electoral legislation and internationally established democratic standards by members of the election administration, election contestants, and civil servants in the pre-election period, as well as to inform citizens of Georgia and the international community of violations and shortcomings related to the electoral processes before the 2016 parliamentary elections, to identify problems in the electoral legislation, and to advocate relevant legislative changes after the elections.

As a rule, GYLA monitors pay particular attention to the following issues:

Staffing of the election administration: whether the election administration (precinct and district election commissions) is composed of professional staff and whether they are selected lawfully;

Identification/elimination of cases of use of administrative resources and vote buying: whether administrative resources are mobilized/used for the benefit of a concrete party (amendments to state and local budgets in prohibited period, involvement of civil servants in election campaign during working hours, etc.);

Environment conducive to free expression of voters' will: whether the pre-election environment and election day are free from violence, intimidation, and

pressure; whether voters are subjected to pressure/intimidation/threats/physical reprisals;

Financing of political parties: whether statutory regulations on donations, election campaign expenditure, and other political funding are violated;

Rights and obligations of election contestants: whether the electoral environment is equal and competitive and whether election contestants violate the electoral legislation; whether politically motivated criminal and administrative cases are prosecuted against politically active persons (members, activists, and candidates of political parties, independent candidates, and individuals associated with politically active persons);

Working environment for the media: whether there are cases of interference with journalistic activity; whether journalists are coerced to disseminate information or to refrain from disseminating it; and whether there are cases of interference with the editorial independence of media outlets;

Inclusive electoral environment: whether the political/electoral rights are guaranteed and whether there is equal environment for women, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities.

In the case of identification of violations, the organization submits the relevant information to the election administration, the Interagency Commission for Free and Fair Elections, the State Audit Office, and other relevant agencies to ensure that they respond in the manner envisaged by law.

At this point, the statistics of applications/complaints filed by GYLA observers regarding various violations are as follows:

The election administration – **14**;

Executive bodies of municipalities – **3**;

The State Audit Office – **3**;

The Georgian National Communications Commission – **2**;

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The Interagency Commission for Free and Fair Elections – **9**;

City/district courts – **4**;

Appeals courts – **3**.

GYLA is going to assess the timeliness, lawfulness, and appropriateness of the public agencies' response to violations identified in the pre-election period at a later stage. We will also separately inform the public about trends identified in electoral disputes in the pre-election period.

In connection with some (alleged) violations cited in the bulletin, GYLA has requested additional information the results of whose analysis will also be provided to the public.

With the aim of helping conduct free, fair, competitive, and inclusive elections, the organization is monitoring this year's pre-election period with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).