



GYLA Held Presentation of Monitoring Report of Pre-Election Environment, the Election Day and the Post-Election Period

On February 11, 2013, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association held presentation of the report of monitoring pre-election environment, the Election Day and the post-election period. The report covers the results of monitoring from August 1 through October 20, 2012 (GYLA started monitoring of pre-election processes much earlier, on January 1, 2012, and evaluated the pre-election environment in two interim reports).

During the pre-election period (August 1 – September 30) GYLA's monitors verified every account of alleged violation with primary sources to obtain credible reports. Through observers dislocated at precincts on the Election Day and by means of mobile teams GYLA carried out monitoring in the following 35 districts throughout Tbilisi and the regions: Batumi, Khelvachauri, Kobuleti, Khulo, Kutaisi, Tskaltubo, Sachkhere, Ozurgeti, Lanchkhuti, Chokhatauri, Zugdidi, Poti, Gori, Kareli, Kaspi, Khashuri, Akhaltsikhe, Rustavi, Marneuli, Gardabani Bolnisi, Telavi, Sagarejo, Lagodekhi, Dusheti election precincts and 10 election precincts in Tbilisi. GYLA had more than 300 observers in election commissions at all levels.

Further, GYLA had monitoring missions in the following five countries abroad – New York, USA; Budapest, Hungary; London, Great Britain; Paris, France and Berlin, Germany.

From the Election Day till tabulation of results, GYLA's observers permanently observed election procedures at 35 district election commissions and the Central Election Commission. By filing complaints with the election administration and in

courts, GYLA facilitated objective expression of voters' will, promotion of progressive interpretation of law, taking of legal measures against offenders and prevention of future election violations.

GYLA also monitored repeat elections at Khashuri, Gori and Signaghi precincts on October 14, 2012.

The monitoring report contains detailed accounts of violations during pre-election campaigning, on the Election Day and during tabulation of results. It outlines key trends that accompanied the October 1, 2012 Parliamentary Elections and offers concrete recommendations that should be reflected both in legislation and practice. The pre-election period was marked with high political competition, tense atmosphere and multiple violations. Regrettably, there was a lack of pre-election campaigning focused on discussion of election programs and thematic debate. To the contrary, the pre-election campaign involved plentiful use of compromising information, multiple violations of law, active use of hate speech, violent and aggressive clashes.

It seemed that there was a competition between the state and the opposition, as opposed to political parties, which was caused by absence of a boundary line between the ruling party and the government's administrative function. This amounts to an important violation of internationally recognized standards and makes it almost impossible to have a healthy political competition. It is safe to say that the pre-election environment was strikingly unequal and unfair.

Despite certain procedural violations, the process was ongoing in a peaceful environment; however, there were certain exceptions. For instance, in Khashuri District N35 Special Forces interfered in counting of votes at more than 10 election precincts. They threatened and forced PEC members into changing election results in favor of the United National Movement. We believe that it would have been impossible to utilize the Special Forces without involving, engaging and informing high political officials. These facts call for an immediate, effective and objective investigation, which should not be difficult in view of the fact that there are myriad pieces of evidence corroborating these facts.

Lastly, the 2012 parliamentary elections were marked by a peaceful transition of power through elections for the first time in the history of Georgia, in which Georgian

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voters played the greatest role.