



The Statement concerning the United National Movement Leaving the Interagency Commission

We would like to voice our position on the developments at the session of Interagency Commission for Free and Fair Elections held on October 11, 2013 when the United National Movement made a decision on leaving the commission. Some of the observers who attended the meeting confirm verbal altercation between UNM member and the head of the commission. According to them MP Tinatin Bokuchava accused Tsulukiani of trying to “destroy” the United National Movement while the Minister of Justice responded that they have already done it.

We regret that such unconstructive dialogue was not for the first time at the commission and it has happened previously not only with the United National Movement, but also in terms of other attendants who submit information about election campaign related violations.

We would like to mention definitely that the format of interagency commission is decisive in pre-election period, since political parties and election monitoring organizations have opportunity to state key issues of election period before the commission and to submit information about alleged violations in pre-election period. Based on this information, the commission issues recommendations that are necessary for fulfillment with a view to conduct free elections in the country.

The commission, operating under the Justice Ministry, elaborated several really important recommendations; in multiple cases issues were discussed thoroughly and participants of sessions were given appropriate time to lay out their position, which

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we assess definitely as positive. But, regrettably instead of constructive discussion of problematic issues related to pre-election period, commission sessions were often becoming a venue for political debates. We consider that unconstructive atmosphere at the sessions of the interagency commission prejudices effectiveness of its operation and puts at risk public trust to its activities.

We understand that it is difficult to review certain issues at the commission sessions beyond the political context when members of the political parties participate there, yet the Minister of Justice, as the head of the commission who is also facilitator of the session, should have greater obligation of tolerance.

When only two weeks are left before presidential elections and the election campaign enters into active phase, it is vital for parties to return to working regime. To this end, the conflict needs to be resolved immediately. We consider reasonable the UNM to resume its participation in the commission and the head of the commission to secure holding of sessions in “constructive” atmosphere.

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