

Caucasus ELECTIONSWATCH

A weekly review of elections related processes in the Caucasus Region

21 August 2012

Who's going? Who's staying? Who's coming?

Although attention is currently focused on the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Georgia on 1 October, discussions in international circles is increasingly focussed on the three Presidential elections in the South Caucasus, scheduled to be held in 2013. Armenia will elect its President in February and Azerbaijani in October. The Georgian Presidential election is also due next year.

The three countries, different as they are, have one thing in common in their modern political history. No President has ever left office because he was defeated in an election. They were either forced out or died in office. In Armenia in 2008 the incumbent, Robert Kocharian left office at the end of his two terms. The constitution in Armenia and Georgia allows a person to hold office for only two terms. It was the same in Azerbaijan, but the constitution was changed after the last election, thus enabling the current President Ilham Aliev to run for a third term.

As things stand therefore there should be at least one change of president next year, in Georgia, since the current President has already had two terms in office. President Mikheil Saakashvili has kept his plans for 2013 to himself. This has resulted in speculation that either the constitution will be changed in the last moment to

enable him to run again, or that there will be a "Putin" scenario, whereby Saakashvili will become Prime Minister for one term and then return to the presidency after that. In any case Saakashvili does not look like a person about to retire from politics. His front line role in the current parliamentary election campaign reinforces speculation that the opaque collegiate leadership, made up of a handful of senior officials and that holds ultimate power in today's Georgia, is waiting for the election result before taking a final decision.



In both Armenia and Azerbaijan the incumbents will run again, and there is as yet not even a clear idea of who will challenge them, let alone the chances of a successful challenge.

In all this the international community, and most of all the European Union with all its declared interests and strategies for the region, remains a distant observer. Many analysts think that much will depend on how the international community deals with the forthcoming Georgian parliamentary elections. A firm support for the democratic process and a robust response in case of gross

election violations will set the tone for next year. A weak and inadequate response will do so too.

What happens in Georgia on 1 October, and Europe's reaction to it, will have implications in the region and beyond. ■

Source: CEW Editorial team.

Caucasus Elections Watch is a specialised weekly publication focusing on elections related processes in the Caucasus, with news and analysis compiled by experts with long experience of the region.

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Copenhagen

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has announced that a delegation headed by its President Riccardo Migliori, will visit Tbilisi on 20 August on a pre-election fact finding mission. He will be accompanied by the Vice President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Tonino Picula, who will head of election observation mission of the Assembly in Georgia in October and by Assembly Secretary General Spencer Oliver. There is already a lot of confusion in the Georgian media about the different roles of the OSCE PA and ODIHR in the election observation process and very little sign that these roles are being properly explained to avoid misunderstandings. ■

Tbilisi

The Ambassadorial Working Group (AWG), which brings together diplomats based in Tbilisi from OSCE states, has urged political parties to come to an agreement over the Code of Conduct released by the "This Affects You Too" Campaign in mid-July.

The AWG released a statement on Friday 17 August, reports civil.ge, affirming that it "strongly supports Georgia's democratic development, and in particular the fundamental principles of free and fair elections, a level playing field for all participants, equal access to media and respect for the rule of law."

The statement continues that "in this context, the AWG urges all political parties and authorities at all levels to adhere to the 17 point code of conduct proposed by the campaign "This Affects You Too," and to respect both the election results validated by the Central Election Commission, and a process assessed by independent international observer organisations, in the first instance the OSCE/ODIHR, as having met international standards and norms."

The main obstacle for agreement to the code of conduct has been this last point. The Georgian Dream coalition has said that it will sign onto the 17-point code of conduct offered by the "This Affects You Too" campaign but has offered to change the wording regarding the acceptance of the elections results – a point insisted upon by the governing United National Movement (UNM).

The Georgian Dream has instead suggested that parties promise to resolve "all the disputed issues about election results solely through peaceful and constitutional way." A point which has proved unacceptable for the UNM.

"This Affects You Too" has stated that it is willing to negotiate the text with the parties so as to reach a compromise, but stresses the urgency of this action, given the elections are less than 6 weeks away.

The AWG statement concludes by underlining "the important role played by civil society organisations (CSOs), and reminds all parties that CSOs and independent observer organisations should be allowed to operate without any undue pressure or interference."

"The AWG urges all political parties to adhere to the above-mentioned proposals in the interest of advancing Georgia's democratic development by ensuring free and fair parliamentary elections." ■

Tbilisi

There has been a positive response to the results of the work of the Voters List Verification Commission (VLVC), chaired by Mamuka Katsitadze, a multi-partisan body - established this year to ensure the Voters' list is accurate and to help dispel concerns about the electoral roll that have clouded previous Georgian elections.

The International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), a Georgian democracy watchdog, received the work of the VLVC positively. ISFED has been following the work of the VLVC since it was established.

Though its initial analysis of the VLVC's work was positive, ISFED still highlighted areas of worry. Particularly, it raised concerns over the training and selection process for registrars and the manner in which door-to-door voter verification was conducted. The main issue that was brought to the attention of the VLVC was the fact that when encountering that a voter was either deceased or living abroad, registrars did not always fill in the correct form to ensure that the voters status would be changed. According to Nino Lomjaria, of ISFED, the watchdog representatives recorded all such incidents and forwarded the details, along with the address at which the incident occurred, to the Commission. ISFED followed the activities of the VLVC throughout all 73 municipalities and cities in Georgia.

The Council of Europe also had positive things to say about the work of the VLVC. Igor Gaon, the Elections Programme Advisor for the Council of Europe in Georgia, noted that the issues facing the voters' list in Georgia, notably registration of citizens living abroad, were similar to those faced by developed countries as well.

The Georgian Dream coalition, has conducted its own voters' list verification exercise, which concluded its activities on 5 August. Georgia Dream lawyer, Zakaria Kutsnashvili, noted that their results were sent to the VLVC on 17 August.

Mamuka Katsitadze, the Chair of the VLVC, welcomed the positive assessment of the Commission's work thus far.

Noting that there were "always going to be shortcomings," Katsitadze explained that "no one had the illusion that the result would be flawless. However, when in the end you get an unarguably positive evaluation, you are left with only one option, to be overwhelmed with a feeling of satisfaction."

The final list will be made public by the Central Elections Commission (CEC) on 15 September, just two weeks before the polls take place. The current list stands at a total of 3, 621, 256 – the highest number recorded since before the fall of Communism. ■

EU-funded monitoring gives picture of current media situation in Georgia ahead of polls.

The results of the most recent round of media monitoring activities in Georgia ahead of the autumn parliamentary elections have been released. The project, which is run by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its local partners, and is funded by the European Union (EU), involves the monitoring of major media sources in Georgia. The initiative, which is based on a similar exercise conducted ahead of the 2010 parliamentary elections, is much broader in scope this time as it focuses on several of the most important media providers including radio, television, print and online publications.

There are four local partners working with UNDP, each responsible for a different media outlet. The Caucasus Research Resource Centre (CRRC) is in charge of monitoring TV stations. Internews Georgia focuses on monitoring radio station activities. The International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) monitors print media, and on-line publications are monitored by the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA).

Engaged in both quantitative and qualitative analysis, the undertaking records both how much time/space is allocated to each individual political party or movement as well as the tone of how the political subject is depicted.

TV Monitoring Results, CRRC, July 3-16

The CRRC monitored the reporting on seven TV stations from July 3-16: Channel 1, Rustavi 2, Imedi, Maestro, Kavkasia, Channel 9 and Real TV.

They found that the government dominated in terms of time on all channels except for Channel 1 and Real TV; the Georgian Dream coalition received the second most amount of airtime.

With regard to tone, the CRRC report found that Channel 1, Maestro and Kavkasia were the most neutral when presenting the various political subjects.

Rustavi 2 and Imedi presented the government, the Christian Democratic Movement (CDM) and the President in a positive tone 45-61% of the time. The Georgian Dream coalition, however, was presented in a negative tone 53% of the time on these channels.

The government was depicted most negatively by Channel 9, 30-51% of the time, whereas the opposition coalition Georgian Dream was presented most negatively on Real TV, about 65% of the time.

Radio Monitoring Results, Internews Georgia, June 12 – July 23

From June 12 to July 23, the evening news broadcasts of twelve radio stations (Radio 1, Radio Imedi, Radio Utsnobi, Radio Palitra, Voice of Abkhazia, Hot Chocolate, Radio Hereti, Radio Atinati, Radio Old City,

Radio Green Wave, Fortuna, and Radio Liberty) were monitored by Internews Georgia.

In general, Internews Georgia found that all of the radio stations presented the facts of the story in a relatively neutral tone and were less inclined to provide a personal opinion or to editorialise on a story. The monitoring body found that as the campaign approached, the radio stations provided more airtime to both political stories as well as opportunities for politicians to come speak and present their ideas.

The latest monitoring period has also witnessed greater coverage of the activities of local NGOs, international organisations, election observation missions and, particularly, the Voters' List Verification Commission.

The monitors observed that in contrast to the TV stations, radio stations provided the most airtime to the opposition Georgian Dream coalition.

Print Monitoring, ISFED, May 11 – July 9:

ISFED monitored approximately 2,000 articles from 10 print publications, including dailies, weekly newspapers and magazines between May 11 and July 19, 2012. The print publications included 24 Hours, The Resonance, The Kvrisi Palitra, The Kvrisi Kronika, Asaval-Dasavali, Alia, Tabula, Tbiliselebi, Gza, and Sarke.

The top three subjects in all print media, except for Tbiliselebi Magazine, were (in order) the Georgian Dream coalition, the President and the government. Tbiliselebi allocated less than 1% of its space to the Georgian Dream coalition.

The only opposition party outside of the Georgian Dream to receive space and attention in the print media sources was the Christian Democratic Movement.

ISFED reports that while both President Mikheil Saakashvili and leader of the opposition coalition Georgian Dream, Bidzina Ivanishvili, were portrayed negatively in the press, the president was portrayed negatively more times than he was presented positively, whereas the opposite was true for Ivanishvili, who was generally portrayed positively more than he was presented negatively.

ISFED felt that, in general, the print media was hostile and aggressive in its tone when reporting on the current President, government and authorities. The monitoring body was also concerned that the print media was less likely to fact check and often printed stories that were not verified. ISFED noted, however, that Krivis Palitra was an exception to this observation.

The report for on-line media was unavailable at the time of going to press. ■

Report prepared for CEW by Karina Gould.

Georgian politicians on the campaign hustings

Saakashvili: “It is the moment of truth.”

As campaigning swings into full gear, the ruling party, the United National Movement (UNM), places itself at the mercy of the public, as incumbent President Saakashvili describes the upcoming parliamentary elections as a referendum on the government.

Speaking at a campaign stop in the region of Imereti on Tuesday 14 August, President Saakashvili called the 2012 Parliamentary Elections “a Moment of Truth.”

“Each of us should ask ourselves one very simple question – it’s a moment of truth - Is Georgia now a better country than it was eight years ago?” Saakashvili told villagers of the Terjona and Zestaponi municipalities in Imereti region.

“If the answer is positive,” he continued, “and if we want to have [an] even better country, we should all stand together – that’s our offer.”

On the same day, at a different campaign stop in Imereti region, the President told supporters that this election would be a referendum on the government.

Just as the 2003 parliamentary elections, which were followed by the Rose Revolution, were “a referendum [on] Shevardnadze’s eleven-year rule,” the “2012 election,” said Saakashvili, “is a referendum for the government, which came into power after the Rose Revolution.”

“If we want our country to be even better we should vote for continuation of the course, which turned Georgia into a better country,” Saakashvili implored.

This theme has recurred in a number of speeches of other UNM leaders. Introducing the candidates for the Tbilisi constituencies for the UNM, the Mayor of Tbilisi, Gigi Ugulava, asked, “Is Georgia [a] better country than it was eight years ago? Is Tbilisi a better city than it was eight years ago? Is the life of our citizens better now, regardless of remaining problems, than it was eight years ago?”

Ugulava concluded that there are a large majority of Georgians who would answer positively to the above question. In a jab at the opposition coalition, Georgian Dream, Ugulava continued that “It means that our citizens do not want to go back into the past; our citizens do not want to dream about the past.”

On August 15, Saakashvili stopped in Rustavi, naming Mamuka Chikovani, Deputy Governor of the Kvemo Kartli region and former mayor of Rustavi, as the UNM majoritarian candidate for Rustavi. While in Rustavi, the President took part in a ceremony initiating construction on a highway that will link Rustavi with the capital. Alluding to his party’s plans if re-elected, he said “We are going to build Georgia for many years to come.” ■



Christian Democratic Movement launches campaign in an effort not to be squeezed by its two larger rivals.

Leaders of the party announced at the same rally that one of their key objectives for this campaign is to reduce tariffs on utilities in Tbilisi. They plan on doing this by buying back two electricity companies from foreign owners. The money would come from the state budget and the purchase would cost about GEL 1 billion.

Giorgi Targamadze, leader of the Christian Democratic Movement is hoping to secure a place for his party in the next parliament by offering to the electorate an alternative to his two bigger opponents.

The CDM has also pledged to tackle issues surrounding youth unemployment in the capital as well as providing access to clean water for drinking and irrigation purposes. ■

Ivanishvili: “Like theft, falsification of [elections] is a criminal offense too.”

The leader of the Georgian Dream coalition, Bidzina Ivanishvili has warned against election fraud in the coming poll in Georgia. Speaking at a campaign rally in the city of Rustavi Ivanishvili recalled the role of the city as a former industrial hub of the country and said that his political movement will restore the city to its previous glory when it assumes power after the election.

Ivanishvili spoke at length about the election process. “Election day is the day when power is in the hands of people; this is decisive day and if we fail to use this day, everything might be late next day,” he told thousands of supporters gathered at the rally.

The Georgian web portal civil.ge reports that in his speech Ivanishvili also said that under the threat of losing their jobs, people of various professions, employed in the state-funded institutions “are dragged into” the process of “falsifying elections” by the authorities; in particular he specified that public school teachers, apparently referring to those usually serving as members of precinct election commissions, “have been made by the authorities as main participants and executors of this falsification.”



“Fear towards losing the job cannot serve as an excuse in this case,” Ivanishvili said, adding that ballot rigging was no less crime than money counterfeiting. “No one should be surprised if in the just and democratic state ballot riggers will be treated by the law in the same way like money counterfeiter.”

“We have elaborated mechanisms how to resist this machinery of falsifying [elections]. We know all those people, whom [the authorities] have dragged into this process of falsifying [elections],” Ivanishvili said. “Like theft, falsification of [elections] is a criminal offense too and everyone who commits this crime will be punished. We will be the first who will establish this practice in this country and by doing so we will put an end to a shameful tradition of falsifying elections, which we have failed to overcome for last twenty years already.” ■



Ivanishvili in significant meeting with former Parliamentary Speaker

Before going to address his supporters in Rustavi, Bidzina Ivanishvili, leader of the Georgian Dream opposition coalition, met with ex-parliamentary speaker Nino Burjanadze, leader of Democratic Movement-United Georgia (DMUG) party.

Burjanadze, who led street protest rallies in 2011 which were broken up by the riot police, announced on August 9 that her party “was putting aside political ambitions” and was not going to run in the October 1 parliamentary elections in order not to split opposition votes. DMUG, however, also said that it was not a boycott of elections and called on the voters to turn out at the polling stations on October 1. Ivanishvili praised Burjanadze’s announcement as “absolutely patriotic decision.”

Georgian Dream’s press office said that during the meeting Ivanishvili and Burjanadze discussed current political developments in the country.

Whilst Burjanadze, who at some point was Georgia’s most popular politicians, has now been largely side-lined by events, the meeting is seen as an important step in the consolidation of anti-government forces ahead of the parliamentary elections in October. ■

Georgian NGOs condemn the lack of impartiality of the State Audit Service and accuse it of “irreparable damage to the election environment in Georgia.”

The “This Affects You Too” campaign, a coalition of democracy advocates and civil society activists from across Georgia, have appealed to the international community to pay more attention to the campaign environment in the South Caucasus nation.

With the rejection of the appeal made by billionaire leader of the opposition coalition, Georgian Dream, Bidzina Ivanishvili, and Georgian Dream majoritarian candidate, former footballer, Kakha Kaladze, to overturn what they deem unlawful fines, This Affects You Too is turning up its international game plan.

This Affects You Too has publicly questioned the impartiality of the State Audit Service (SAS) in Georgia, arguing that the SAS has demonstrated its allegiance to the ruling party as opposed to a free and democratic Georgia. In a statement released this week, the election-monitoring coalition has called the work of the SAS “too subjective” and “aimed at [harassing] opposition parties” - pointing to the particular attention the SAS is paying to the Georgian Dream coalition.

The report continues that while the SAS, at first, was at least trying to cloak their activities as objective, at this stage the SAS, according to the This Affects You Too report, does not even bother to feign impartiality. The report cites the fact that despite serious allegations of vote-buying, illegal campaign contributions and the abuse of administrative resources that have surfaced against the ruling party, a disproportionately small amount of cases have been opened, let alone pursued, against the governing United National Movement in comparison with those brought against the opposition.

The statement raises the concern that while the SAS is requiring incredibly detailed information from the opposition, state agencies and the ruling party are refusing to provide information requested by the campaign organisation. In regard to information solicited by the pro-democracy coalition surrounding allegations that the governing party appointed party supporters to government posts, a “gross violation of Georgian Law,” the statement notes that “Tbilisi [City Court] and [Tbilisi City Council have] not provided any information.”

The “considerable lack of openness of state agencies, their lack of willingness to provide access to information about public finances is particularly striking in light of the fact that the State Audit Service is demanding unjustifiable and unprecedented transparency from natural persons related to political parties.”

Even more concerning is the issue raised by the campaign that the SAS instead of providing evidence substantiating its allegations, is placing the burden of proof on individuals who must provide evidence of their innocence; a precedent the authors rightly point to as “dangerous”.

Concluding that the violation of the law by any political party in Georgia is “equally unacceptable” and that offenders should be punished accordingly, This Affects You Too, laments that the law in Georgia is not being applied equally or impartially, resulting in the infliction of “irreparable damage to the election environment in Georgia.”

The campaigners call upon international observers, organisations and foreign missions in Georgia to “make every effort [to improve] the election environment in Georgia and give timely and appropriate assessment to repressive actions of state agencies in this regard.”

This sentiment was also repeated by representatives of the Georgian Dream coalition who met with foreign diplomats on Tuesday 14 August in Tbilisi. The opposition representatives considered it imperative that international observers are present in every region and district in the country during the election to avoid fraudulent results.

Irakli Alasania, one of the senior leaders of the coalition told the diplomats, “We are thankful to the OSCE and other organisations that have already arrived in Georgia and started monitoring, but this is not enough. We expect that more observers will arrive. There should be monitors in each region, but also representations of [civil society] and our coalition.”

Ivanishvili and Kaladze were fined last week by Tbilisi City Court on accusations made by the State Audit Service (SAS) that both businessmen withdrew substantial funds from their personal bank accounts over the past year which may have been used to finance their opposition coalition, the Georgian Dream. The SAS claims that both Ivanishvili and Kaladze transferred the money to other individuals who then donated it back to the Georgian Dream coalition.

The Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA), a legal watchdog group based in Tbilisi, argues that the fines are bogus. Georgian legislation neither prohibits one to withdraw money from one’s own account nor obliges an individual to report the purpose of the withdrawal to the authorities.

Ivanishvili has been fined the equivalent of more than USD 12 million and Kaladze has been fined for approximately USD 10 million. Both politicians have stated they will appeal the decisions to the European Court of Human Rights.

Ivanishvili launched formal arbitration proceedings against the Georgian government on Wednesday 15 August through the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes, a World Bank tribunal, over what he claims has been the Georgian government’s “blatant political attack [against his business and himself] coordinated across all arms of the Georgian state” following his decision to enter politics in October of last year. Pointing to customers of Cartu Bank being coerced into closing their accounts, resulting in a loss of about USD 27 million in October 2011, and the “unjustified” and “unlawful” fines imposed on Cartu Bank, of USD 500,000 and on Ivanishvili of USD 44.8 million, Ivanishvili claims these actions are a result of “Georgia’s efforts to prevent him from exercising his rights as an opposition candidate to President Saakashvili.” As a French citizen, Ivanishvili’s lawyers are claiming that Georgia violated the 1997 bilateral investment treaty with France.

Most recently, the GYLA has called upon the SAS to revoke a new decree on political advertisements, saying that the SAS is again overstepping its legal responsibilities. The new decree would require parties to pay media outlets a week in advance for advertisements and oblige media providers to inform the SAS of the transaction. GYLA states that media broadcasters are already regulated during the election period by the Election Code and the Georgian National Communications Commission. This new decree would place undue burden on media providers, states GYLA. ■

Report prepared by Karina Gould with additional files from the Georgian media.

YAP positioning itself ahead of next year's presidential poll in Azerbaijan.

With the Presidential elections set for October 2013, the ruling party of Azerbaijan, the New Azerbaijan Party (YAP) is feeling out its competition.

Aydin Mirzazade, a Member of Parliament for YAP, told Gun.Az that the YAP considers "every candidate to be a rival" for next year's elections.

The YAP MP assured the press that the ruling party will take steps to ensure all candidates can participate and campaign in the election.

Commenting on incumbent President, and YAP's unofficially confirmed presidential candidate, Ilham Aliyev's democratic record, Mirzazade noted that with Aliyev's candidacy, Azerbaijan will continue on a democratic path of economic growth and stability for the next five years. In conclusion he said that YAP does not consider itself weaker or comparable to any other party.

Ramping up the rhetoric, Deputy Executive Secretary for the YAP, MP Syavush Novruzov, declared that the ruling party considers the "unification of [the Azerbaijani] opposition in one team as impossible."



Novruzov declared that the only reason the opposition parties are holding meetings is to "attract attention [that] they are taking this step together."

"Overall, [the opposition's] goal is to [get noticed this] summer," he concluded.

Commenting on the fact that the opposition has held many meetings, Novruzov mentioned that not every party attends.

Yusif Bagirzade, Chairman of the National Independence Party, however, noted that it was not necessarily the objective that all parties attend every meeting but rather to "create a centre of opposition forces."

"We want to ensure that no opposition party [is] left out of this centre," said Bagirzade.

It should be noted that during the last presidential election, Aliyev won with 88.7% of the vote. Of particular import is that none of the major political opponents participated in that election. Moreover, the 2010 parliamentary elections were also shrouded in controversy as many prominent opposition parties failed to win a single seat. ■

Report compiled for CEW by Karina Gould.

Georgian CEC signs agreement on the use of Administrative resources.

The Georgian Central Elections Commission has signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the use of Administrative resources during the election campaign. The Memorandum was signed with the Inter-Agency Task Force based at the National Security Council (IATF), charged with monitoring campaign violations, and seven Georgian non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The Georgian Election Code forbids the use of administrative resources, particularly concerning potential abuse by the party in power. However, as Nina Khatiskatsi informs, the Election Code itself is ambiguous as to what it means to abuse administrative resources. This is why the signing of the Memorandum is so important - so that all parties involved in the election are on the same page as to what it means to abuse administrative resources.

According to a report from Democracy and Freedom Watch, the Memorandum defines administrative resources, outlines the principles and procedures for administrative processes and trials, and binds the signatories to ensure equal opportunities and a fair environment for all elections subjects during the campaign.

The initiative, which was coordinated by the International Foundation of Election Systems (IFES), included amongst the signatories Transparency International Georgia, the Georgian Young Lawyers Association and the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy. ■

Why one man, one vote means something different in Georgia

With the publication of the voters' list ahead of the 1 October parliamentary election the glaring difference in the size of constituencies, and the impact that it may have on the result of the elections has become only too obvious. Despite the fact that this issue has been highlighted many times by the international community, particularly the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the OSCE no remedial action has been taken.

According to the data that has been released by the Central Elections Commission of Georgia there are 3,621,256. Whilst all voters have one vote the importance of this vote varies depending on the constituency. Whilst half the MPs are elected on a proportional party list, the other half are elected through single member constituencies. The size of these constituencies varies enormously with some having

only a few thousand voters and others exceeding 150,000 voters. This problem is not unique to Georgia but whereas in most countries boundary commissions constantly revise boundaries to keep the difference between the largest and the smallest constituencies within a predefined range in Georgia the situation has not been corrected. The process is not painless in many countries, as many communities insist to keeping their local MP even if they had become too small to do so. Exceptions are usually made for islands, or remote mountain communities. In urban areas however such big discrepancies are considered intolerable.

Whilst it is too late to resolve this problem in Georgia ahead of the coming elections it is already possible to see that this may become a serious issue in case of a close result. ■

Source CEV.

Number of Voters According to Election Districts, for the Parliamentary Elections 2012

Table reproduced from the website of the central Elections Commission of Georgia

District Number of Voters

01-Mtatsminda 51,910

02-Vake 99,436

03-Saburtalo 128,740

04-Krtsanisi 47,110

05-Isani 117,646

06-Samgori 155,502

07-Chughureti 58,582

08-Didube 72,122

09-Nadzaladevi 140,623

10-Gldani 155,822

11-Sagarejo 45,793

12-Gurjaani 55,432

13-Sighnaghi 31,864

14-Dedoplistskaro 23,207

15-Lagodekhi 39,730

16-Kvareli 29,652

17-Telavi 58,005

18-Akhmeta 30,802

19-Tianeti 11,076

20-Rustavi 110,607

21-Gardabani 74,514

22-Marneuli 98,888

23-Bolnisi 58,091

24-Dmanisi 22,949

25-Tsalka 24,303

26-Tetritskaro 21,822

27-Mtskheta 44,754

28-Dusheti 26,386

29-Kazbegi 5,779

30-Kaspi 40,433

32-Gori 112,738

33-Kareli 37,647

35-Khashuri 50,446

36-Borjomi 27,609

37-Akhalsikhe 36,524

38-Adigeni 15,755

39-Aspindza 9,868

40-Akhalkalaki 41,021

41-Ninotsminda 22,837

43-Oni 6,855

44-Ambrolauri 11,980

45-Tsageri 12,006

46-Lentekhi 5,955

47-Mestia 8,413

48-Kharagauli 20,364

49-Terjola 34,744

50-Sachkhere 44,337

51-Zestaponi 57,190

52-Baghdati 23,415

53-Vani 26,855

54-Samtredia 48,446

55-Khoni 24,260

56-Chiatura 45,397

57-Tkibuli 23,900

58-Tskaltubo 53,384

59-Kutaisi 163,654

60-Ozurgeti 64,464

61-Lanchkhuti 30,112

62-Chokhatauri 18,856

63-Abasha 22,080

64-Senaki 42,806

65-Martvili 34,625

66-Khobi 29,499

67-Zugdidi 129,170

68-Tsalenjikha 32,147

69-Chkhorotsku 23,190

70-Poti 41,658

79-Batumi 131,756

80-Keda 15,822

81-Kobuleti 69,353

82-Shuakhevi 15,311

83-Khelvachauri 48,796

84-Khulo 24,431

3,621,256

1. Among them, 77232 voters, removed from the registry on the basis of a statement of an individual or dwelling owner.

2. Among them, 111763 voters, removed from the address registry, revealed as a result of a door-to-door campaign, implemented by the Commission for Ensuring the Accuracy of Voters' List

Information provided by the Central Elections Commission of Georgia (www.cec.gov.ge)