

Caucasus ELECTIONSWATCH

A weekly review of elections related processes in the Caucasus Region

07 August 2012

The race is on..... Georgian Parliamentary elections set for 1st October.

The days of waiting for Georgians are over. The date for the forthcoming parliamentary elections has now been set for 1st October, and the campaign which had already been under way unofficially for some time, has now started in full swing. 19 political parties have already been registered for the election, and a number of others are in the process of being so, but there is little doubt that this election is going to be primarily a two way race between the governing United National Movement of President Mikhail Saakashvili and the Georgian Dream coalition led by Bidzina Ivanishvili.

In the first large political event after the day of the elections was appointed, Ivanishvili addressed a large and enthusiastic crowd in the Black Sea port of Batumi on a wide range of issues. On social issues, he told the crowd, who stayed through the speech despite the rain, that,

“Promoting investments is very good, but it should not be happening at the expense of our citizens... We will change the labour code so that not a single employer will be able to infringe rights of an employee anymore. We will restore legal balance between an employer and an employee,”

Whilst the day to day campaign of the United National Movement is being fronted by the Parliamentary speaker, David Bakradze, President Saakashvili has been weighing in with public appearances in different parts of the country.

On 4th August President Saakashvili arrived in a small resort of Beshumi in the mountainous area of the Adjara Autonomous Republic, shortly after noon. An area close to the resort is a venue for two-day traditional festivity, Shuamtoba, held there annually.



President Saakashvili addressing supporters in Svaneti on 2 August.

past.” Civil.ge reporting the event said that “in his recent public speeches Saakashvili often mentions ‘politicians of the past’, who, he says, try to

Addressing people gathered at the venue of the festivity, many of whom were wearing the ruling party’s t-shirts, President Saakashvili spoke, among other things, about “politicians of the



Georgian Dream Coalition rally in Batumi on 5 August.

throw Georgia back into the past and although he never mentions anyone by name it is obvious that Ivanishvili and his Georgian Dream coalition are the targets of these remarks.” Many observers find Saakashvili’s line of attack somewhat baffling since of all the current front line Georgian politicians he is the only one to have served as Minister in President Shevardnadze’s government in the 1990s, and was even Shevardnadze’s campaign manager in the 2000 Presidential elections. At the time Ivanishvili was not even in Georgia let alone in Georgian politics.

Unperturbed, Saakashvili told his audience in his televised speech in Beshumi, that he would not “hand the country, built by me” over to “politicians of the past” and would not let them “destroy it,” according to civil.ge.

“Politicians of the past have always been looking at you. We want to tell those people, who now fumble into our rebuilding process with their mummified hands from the past, those who shamelessly state that there were better times in the past, those who tell from TV that new resorts blemish mountains and that new roads insult your authenticity, those who say that old corrupt officials should come back, those who say that old way of life should be returned and those who tell us that we should go back under the old imperial control because it is more comfortable there – we want to tell those people that there is no turning back for us; Georgia and Adjara will move only forward towards better future.”



to the people. I do not know any other government capable to say it publicly, except of the Soviet one.” ■

Source: CEW staff team with civil.ge.

In his Batumi speech Ivanishvili reacted to the President’s comments, saying: “I do not know any other government of any country, which would dare to declare so publicly that it is not intending to go away and to willingly transfer power

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.

Caucasus Elections Watch is also distributed electronically. For more in depth articles you may also visit our website www.electionswatch.org or join our facebook page.

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Tbilisi

According to reports from Democracy and Freedom Watch, the Georgian Research Development Institute (GDRI) has been the most recent target of asset seizure by the Georgian authorities.

GDRI, an organisation founded in 2011 by Georgian researchers Vakhtang Khmaladze, Gia Khukhashvili and Zaz Shatrisishvili to both conduct research and improve knowledge of politics in Georgia, was not even advised of the seizure by the authorities. It was only when the chair of GDRI's council, Teona Akbardia, went to the bank to carry out a transaction that she was informed that this would not be possible.

When she tried to discover the reason behind the frozen assets, Akbardia said "The bank responded with a letter and told me that the account had been seized by decision of [the Tbilisi City Court]. Afterwards, I appealed to the court too, but received a completely unclear answer. I have no idea why the court made such a decision."

GDRI suspects that the motivation for the Court's action might be their affiliation with Georgian Dream coalition leader Bidzina Ivanishvili. Ivanishvili has previously made a donation to the organisation. Furthermore, in the autumn of 2011, GDRI conducted a poll which revealed a greater level of support for Ivanishvili than a poll conducted by Gallup for the International Republican Institute around the same time.

However, GDRI still has no concrete evidence as to why their accounts have been seized, paralysing their organisation and making it impossible for them to pay their 22 full-time and 12 part-time staff.

Finally, as is the case with other individuals and bodies under investigation by the Tbilisi City Court, GDRI has been informed they do not have the right to appeal the Court's decision. ■

Tbilisi

Beginning on 31 July, the ruling United National Movement party (UNM) launched an advertisement campaign attacking the opposition coalition Georgian Dream's reluctance to sign on to the Code of Conduct for political parties during the campaign period the UNM presented on 14 July.

The TV ad states that "We [the UNM] reject vote-buying and [the] use of administrative resources; we reject election-related violence. Only one-party – Georgian Dream – has rejected this rule." It continues to ask. "Why? What are they planning?"

While welcoming the general idea proposed by the UNM, the Georgian Dream has raised issue with the wording of the fourth point of the Code presented by the UNM.

The fourth point asks parties "to recognise [the] election results summarised by the Central Election Commission and deemed legitimate by observer organisations with [a] credible reputation."

Though by no means legally binding, it is clear that the opposition does not want to commit itself morally to recognising election results it might not consider to be free or fair.

Instead, the Georgian Dream has offered the following wording in replace of the fourth point: for all parties to resolve "all the disputed issues about [the] election results solely through peaceful and constitutional way[s]."

The ruling party welcomed the Georgian Dream suggestion as an additional point to the Code; however, they remained adamant that the Ivanishvili-led coalition also accept their initial point- hinting that the Georgian Dream's refusal to accept this point is proof of their intentions to demonstrate in the streets if the results are not in their favour. ■

Tbilisi

The Committee for Open Democracy (COD), which has been conducting a long-term election observation mission in Georgia for three months, welcomed the announcement of October 1st as the date for Parliamentary Elections in the country.

"Georgia's a wonderful country that has made tremendous progress," said Brian Mefford, Executive Director of the international NGO. "The President invited us and other election observers to monitor the elections, which is more than just election day. This is important for international acceptance of Georgia's election results. But lately, we're a little concerned, especially for the economic and security future of Georgia. When twenty percent of your country is occupied by Russia, you simply can't afford to leave any doubt about your democratic credentials. Especially if you want the economic prosperity, security, and genuine prestige as a developed country that comes with NATO membership."

"It's not a coincidence the former Warsaw Pact countries that achieved and preserve democracy have also earned the security and prestige of NATO membership," said COD Board member Bruce Barcelo. "But given recent events, the Georgian people and the Government need to step back for a second and think carefully, because NATO's not only listening to Georgia, they're watching Georgia and its leaders. It will either proceed democratically, or it won't. Polls and words show the country overwhelmingly wants NATO membership, but one can't be under any illusions about this. American Ambassador Norland called the elections a litmus test, saying so right before the Senate. And a little while later James Appathurai, NATO's Special Representative for South Caucasus and Central Asia, called the elections a 'significant test', right there in Tbilisi to members of the media. That's severe language in the diplomatic world, and no amount of words will change their judgement of Georgia's deeds."

"The US Ambassador and NATO aren't joking," added Mefford. "This election is a test, and a crucial one. No matter what country we're talking about, NATO won't accept internal brutality or corrupt electoral behavior into their ranks, because those countries make dangerous allies. NATO membership, resolving the occupation, economic prosperity...they're all at stake in this election. This could be the most consequential election this century in Georgia. We want to see the nation succeed, but we're impartial observers of the process. Let's hope, for Georgia's sake, that everything is free, fair, and transparent. ■

As Aliyev plans third term in office, Azerbaijani Opposition plans to intensify protest activities this autumn.

With recent announcements by the ruling party in Azerbaijan that incumbent President and party chairman, Ilham Aliyev will be nominated for a third term as the party's presidential candidate, the opposition in the country has decided to ramp up its public activities this autumn.

The Public Chamber (PC), a coalition of prominent opposition parties who found themselves without a single seat following the 2010 parliamentary elections, declared on 22 July that it would launch a new wave of protests in the coming months to demand the government establish the necessary conditions for free and fair presidential elections in 2013.

PC activities will be centred on four main goals: the release of political prisoners by Azerbaijani authorities, a guarantee of freedom of assembly, respect for freedom of speech and the media, as well as the implementation of pressing amendments to the Electoral Code.

With respect to the first, the Public Chamber this week made public appeals to both Amnesty International and Christoph Strässer, special rapporteur for political prisoners in Azerbaijan of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The PC asked both bodies to continue their lobbying efforts for the release of political prisoners in the country, a task made all the more difficult as the Government does not acknowledge the existence of political prisoners in Azerbaijan.

Strässer, who attempted to visit the country last summer, has been denied a visa to Azerbaijan since his appointment. According to the Press Service of the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry, the visa was rejected last summer as "there is no such criterion as a political prisoner [in Azerbaijan]. PACE is trying to apply this definition with regard to Azerbaijan. [Strässer's] visit was deemed meaningless because of its purpose. We think defining his mandate in those terms is [an attempt to] segregate Azerbaijan."

More recently, Ali Ahmadov, Executive Secretary for the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party (YAP), while announcing his party's intention to nominate Aliyev to a third term as candidate for the presidency reiterated the absence of political prisoners in Azerbaijan.

In the run up to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit to Azerbaijan several political prisoners were released, including social media activist Bakhtiyar Hajiyev.

According to the Public Chamber, however, two prisoners of conscience, recognised by Amnesty International remain behind bars, Shahin Hasanli, member of the Supreme Board of the Popular Front Party of Azerbaijan and Vidadi Isgandarli. The opposition has appealed to the international community to intensify efforts for their release as well as the release of another 70 individuals they say are also imprisoned for their political views.

Concerning the amendments to the Electoral Code, the PC held a roundtable meeting in June in which they established a working group to develop a proposal in line with the recommended amendments suggested by the Venice Commission following the 2010 Parliamentary elections.

In particular the working group is demanding equal representation of political parties in the composition of the Central Elections Commission, equal and fair access in the candidate registration process and changes to the appeals and complaints mechanism to ensure due process for all cases.

Should the amendments not go through, the opposition has threatened to boycott the political process by not fielding a candidate for the 2013 presidential elections – a move that has not gone without precedent, although perhaps without success.

In the 2008 Presidential elections the most prominent opposition leaders refused to participate in the elections citing the impossibility of winning given the control the ruling party possessed



Isa Gambar contested the 2003 Presidential elections representing 30 opposition parties.

over the process. However foreign diplomats in Baku were at the time critical of the opposition stance, arguing that opposition parties should take every opportunity available to push forward their views. In 2003 the main opposition candidate was Isa Gambar the leader of Musavat Party. His supporters put up a spirited performance in the election and refused to accept the result of the election which marked the first election victory for Ilham Aliyev. ■

This story was prepared for CEW by Karina Gould with additional reporting from RFE/RL, the Azerbaijani press and social media.

Commission finalises work on voters list in time.

President Saakashvili has announced that the parliamentary elections in Georgia be held on the 1 October 2012.

According to the Election Code, while the elections must be held in October, it is at the discretion of the President to set the date. The election date, however, must be announced at least 60 days prior to the opening of the polls.

With the announcement of the elections day begins the official campaign period and with it the obligations listed in the Electoral Code and ancillary legislation, including the new "must carry/must offer" media legislation passed in late June.

Parties will have thirty days to provide the names of majoritarian and list candidates to the Central Election Commission (CEC). Party lists must contain no less than 100 and no more than 200 candidates.

The announcement has been welcomed by the opposition Georgian Dream coalition, which has been formally campaigning since 27 May.

"We are very glad that [the] elections will be held on October 1," said Maia Panjikidze, a spokesperson with the coalition. "It seems that Saakashvili is looking forward to losing [the] elections and we are looking forward to winning."

The Christian Democratic Movement, however, is so not so pleased according to civil.ge. Raising concerns over voters being turned away for the summer holidays, the CDM feels they will only have a solid two weeks of campaigning, especially in Tbilisi, before the elections are held.

The President has repeatedly emphasised that the government and the country are ready to conduct free and fair elections this autumn with an exemplary and transparent campaign season.

According to presidential spokesperson Manana Manjgaladze, Georgia has undertaken all efforts to provide for free and fair elections including, inviting long-term international observers, setting up the Voter's List Verification Commission (VLVC) as well as the establishment of the inter-agency group at the National Security Council tasked with the monitoring of elections violations.

Manjgaladze asserted that President Saakashvili is confident that the upcoming elections will demonstrate "the maturity and vitality of Georgian Democracy" and called upon all Georgian citizens to "take an active part in this process, which is so important for the development of our country."

On 2 August, VLVC chairperson Mamuka Katsitadze of the opposition New Rights party presented the initial findings of the Commission.

Following the conclusion of the door-to-door voter list verification campaign, the VLVC announced that there are 3 483 142 voters in Georgia. Of these, 2 160 608 were verified in person. According to reports from Democracy and Freedom Watch, the VLVC discovered that 25 949 of those on the initial list are deceased, a further 291 471

live abroad, 132 156 did not live at their registered address, 649 839 are internal migrants and 183 621 were unavailable for contact.

For the first time this election, prisoners serving a sentence for "less grave offences" will be allowed to vote in Georgia.

Katsitadze said the VLVC will continue to work on the Voter's List and study complaints and appeals until 1 September, at which point it will begin to finalise the list which will be presented to the CEC on 15 September.

Parliamentary Speaker, Davit Bakradze, said at the presentation that "this work will forever end speculations about how weak elections lists are in Georgia. It is a step forward," he announced for the better management of the elections in October.

Despite these positive steps and the optimism expressed over the composition and verification of the voters' list, the controversy over past voters' lists remains firmly planted in the memories of many NGOs and opposition members in Georgia. In the past, Georgian civil society and opposition parties have accused the government of artificially inflating the number of voters on the lists. A fact that has been noted in OSCE-ODIHR Election Observation Mission reports over the years.

While acknowledging the positive step made by the establishment of the VLVC, a publicly funded body made up of representatives from the ruling party, the opposition and civil society, concerns remain in place.

Levan Vepkhvadze of the Christian Democrats expressed his fear that "this list will only have real meaning if we see it in election districts." ■

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



Georgian Dream takes the lead in most recent polls - results continue to vary widely.

In the most recent round of polling in Georgia, the opposition coalition Georgian Dream led by businessman turned politician Bidzina Ivanishvili has taken a slight lead over the incumbent ruling party - the United National Movement (UNM).

The poll, conducted by Penn Schoen Berland (PSB) on behalf of the European Platform for Democracy in Georgia, showed support for the Georgian Dream at 42% - a notch ahead of the 41% of respondents who said they would support the UNM in the parliamentary elections scheduled for October.

According to the research conducted by PSB, the opposition coalition has made the most inroads with voters over the age of 55 in and around Tbilisi. It is trailing most significantly with young voters under the age of 30 in the Western regions of Georgia.

This is the first poll to present results with the Georgian Dream in the lead.

In comparison with other recent polls, the PSB shows the greatest increase in support for the opposition. Last June both the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) conducted polls which demonstrated an increase in support for the Georgian Dream. However, both the IRI and NDI results showed the UNM maintaining a strong advantage over the opposition.

These differences have led parties of all stripes to criticise the poll conductors and to easily hand out accusations of partisanship or inaccuracy. Nevertheless, despite the major shift in party preferences amongst those polled by PSB, other responses remained quite similar to those found by the survey conducted by NDI last June.

In both surveys, respondents overwhelmingly disapproved of the government's decision to revoke Ivanishvili's citizenship upon his announcement to enter politics. The PSB results, however, were ten percentage points higher than those presented by NDI, with 81% and 71% disapproving respectively.

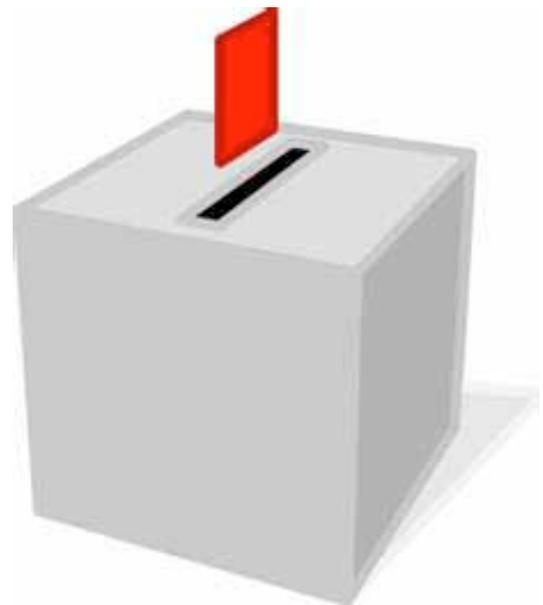
Another parallel between the surveys is the indication that Georgians are worried the country's prospects for democracy are decreasing. The PSB survey found that less than 1 in 5 Georgians are satisfied with the democratic reforms undertaken by the government and less than 1 in 4 Georgians would consider the government's conduct to be open and transparent. This result would tend to reinforce the trend seen in the NDI survey which demonstrated a sharp decrease amongst those who consider Georgia to be a democracy from 49% in February 2012 to 38% in June 2012.

These results, speculate the PSB researchers, could be a result of the increasing pressure the authorities are placing both on the opposition and its candidates as well as on the media in Georgia.

With regards to the most important issues, each survey found that jobs and the economy were at the top of the priority lists for Georgian voters. This is not surprising given that, according to the NDI poll, only 30% of Georgians consider themselves to be employed, either in a full-time or part-time capacity. Moreover, the NDI results highlighted the acute concerns felt by Georgians about the economy, with 67% responding that the country is worse off than in 2008 with regards to rising prices and inflation.

Yet, despite these concerns, a majority of Georgians in both surveys responded that they felt the country was going in the "right direction". The PSB survey is quick to caveat that this is not the case in relation to the economy, where respondents indicated the country was on the "wrong track". Results that reflect the attitudes presented in the NDI survey as well. ■

Report prepared for CEW by Karina Gould with reporting from New Europe and the Georgian media.



Rallies abound in Georgia denouncing controversial satellite seizure as watchdog declares move “wrong” and “against the law”.

The first week of August began with demonstrations by Georgian media and civil society representatives in front of the Presidential residence on 2 August, as well as the Chief Prosecutor’s Office the following day, demanding the authorities return the tens of thousands of satellite dishes seized from Maestro TV on 20 July.

The satellite dishes were seized by the authorities on suspicion that they were to be used as a way to bribe voters on behalf of the Georgian Dream, a coalition of opposition political parties led by billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili. The government cites as proof the fact that Maestro TV purchased the dishes from the same Turkish company as Global TV. It also claims that Maestro TV was instructed to purchase the dishes from Elita Burji Ltd., a company affiliated with the opposition and currently under investigation. Global TV had over 70,000 dishes confiscated at the end of June by the government on the same allegations.

However both media and civil society representatives have rejected the grounds on which the authorities claim to be acting. Organisers of the demonstrations have accused the government of limiting freedom of expression and access to media diversity.

In a rather tongue in cheek protest move, the demonstrators brought a satellite dish signed by supporters to the President’s residence as a gift, “so he could install it and watch all the channels,” explained Basa Janikashvili, a co-founder of Radio Utsnobi in Georgia.

The gift however was refused by an aide to the President, claiming that it was considered to represent a “bribe”. Organisers left the dish in the front entrance having made their point.

On August 3, the following day, the protests moved to the Chief Prosecutor’s Office. The event, titled “Let’s Seize the Prosecutor’s Office”, witnessed activists carrying a “seized” door – illustrating the exaggeration and absurdity of the situation.

Supported by civil society watchdogs Georgia Young Lawyer’s Association (GYLA) and Transparency International Georgia (TI-Georgia), rally organiser Lasha Tughushi, editor-in-chief of the daily Resonansi newspaper has reiterated that the protests will continue until the government returns the confiscated property.

GYLA has assessed the manner in which the authorities have acted as “unfair”, “against the law”, and with the potential to have a “negative impact on the media and election environment” in the country.

In a statement released last week, the legal advocacy group has determined that the impounding of satellite dishes “unjustified”.

“Not only [does the court] not describe and evaluate any evidence,” states GYLA, it does not even provide any mention of any evidence in their ruling. At best, the court’s ruling “provides sketchy theoretical and hypothetical considerations about possible vote-buying by Maestro TV.”

For GYLA, without evidence of a connection between Maestro TV and Elita Burji Ltd., the court cannot proceed legally into its investigation.

Furthermore, GYLA raised concerns over the fact that the ruling itself is inconsistent as the judge at one point refers to a violation of paragraph 3 of Article 151 and then, later on, to a completely different section of the Criminal Code.

After scrupulously studying Article 151, paragraph 3 of the Criminal Procedures Code which stipulates the rules for property seizure in relation to corruption, GYLA has concluded that the government’s action was inappropriate. Under Article 151, property may be seized if it is suspected of being used for the purpose of corruption. However, according to GYLA the court ruling contains neither a mention of corruption nor an argument to how Maestro TV’s property was to be used towards corrupt ends.

Finally, as the investigation has not been launched against a particular person or entity, and no formal charges have been laid, GYLA is concerned that Maestro TV’s right to defence has been inappropriately compromised as the authorities are refusing to provide the media company’s lawyers access to the investigation files and court documents.

Furthermore, GYLA has criticised the confiscation of property as unfair, since under the Criminal Code, property that is under investigation for intent to be used for corruption purposes may be impounded until the investigation is complete – which, according to GYLA, could take up to six years in this case. ■

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



Armenia: protests in the capital and elections in the regions.

As Armenia prepares for the upcoming local elections in the regions of Ararat, Armavir, Shirak, Lori and Syunik on 9 September, opposition activists were out in the streets of Yerevan protesting against prison sentences against opposition activists.

Four activists with the Armenian National Congress (ANC), Artak Karapetyan, Davit Kiramijyan, Tigran Arakelyan and Sargis Gevorgyan, have received sentences between two and six years imprisonment each.

Claiming that these activists have been illegally convicted and sentenced, members of the ANC and other activists demonstrated in front of the Presidential residence in Yerevan last week demanding their immediate release.

Levon Zurabyan, leader of the opposition ANC told news.am that “we will certainly struggle for Armenia to establish fundamental democratic values. We will achieve this goal by resisting police and even being imprisoned.”



ANC Spokesman Levon Zurabyan

Zurabyan assured the press that his political bloc will continue their fight for democracy by using all of their constitutional rights. He made it clear that through four years of action and political activists, the ANC has demonstrated their commitment to democracy in the country.

Outside the capital, a number of regions are preparing for local elections. These will be held on 9 September in Ararat, Armavir, Shirak, Lori, and Syunik.



The Central Election Commission (CEC) announced that candidates must submit their registration documents to the CEC by 10 August. The candidates will be announced on 15 August and campaigning will take place between 22 August and 7 September.

The Prosperous Armenia Party made public its nomination of current Member of Parliament, Samvel Balasanyan, for the Mayoral race in Gyumri and former Deputy Governor Edik Karakhanyan in Vanadzor City.

Though the incumbent mayor of Gyumri has yet to declare his intentions for re-election, deputy head of the Department of Finance of the Shirak Regional Hall will contest the elections in Gyumri for the opposition ARF Dasnaksutyun Party. ■

Source: CEW with news.am

Georgian CEC swings into action ahead of 1st October poll.

The Georgian Central Elections Commission has swung into action as soon as the date of the parliamentary poll was announced. The Commission has been meeting daily under the chairmanship of Zurab Kharatishvili.

On August 2, 2012 at the session, the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Georgia approved the timeline for CEC activities related to the poll

At the same session, the commission determined the rule of distributing/using the funds, allocated by the state, in order to conduct the Parliamentary Elections of October 1, 2012; as well as the rule of distributing/using the funds by district election commissions (DEC) for organizing the elections.

Along with the rules, conditions and terms for the competition of the members of the precinct election commission (PEC) - created for the Parliamentary Elections 2012, the CEC also determined the number of assistant and technical staff of the DECs. Report form of election-related expenses of the DECs has also been approved.

The commission defined the minimum amount of supporters' signatures for the candidates, nominated by initiative group of voters at relevant majoritarian election district for the Parliamentary Elections 2012.

On August 4, 2012, the Georgian CEC appointed its representatives at District Election Commissions (DEC) and Precinct Election Commissions (PEC) of those DECs for the Elections of the Parliament of Georgia 2012; the CEC determined rights and duties of the above-mentioned newly elected representatives as well. The commission defined the type of badges of its representatives appointed at the DECs and PECs. The CEC also elected temporary members of all the District Election Commissions (73 DECs).

The CEC determined the rule of creating the PECs, special groups, their composition, polling terms and summarizing the election results, in order to ensure the participation in the proportional Parliamentary Elections 2012 and the realization of the voting rights for the Georgian citizens, serving at peacekeeping battalions of Georgian Armed Forces in Afghanistan - in Georgian military units dislocated abroad.

On August 5, 2012, the CEC adopted an ordinance on making amendments in the Agenda of Electoral Activities for the Elections of the Parliament of Georgia, to be conducted on October 1, 2012. The commission also adopted a decree on making amendments in the CEC regulation.

At the same session, types of ballot boxes and envelopes for the Parliamentary Elections 2012 were defined. The commission refused to register international NGO "The National Section of Georgia of International Society for Human Rights" (ISHR-IGFM).

Source: CEW with the Central Elections Commission of Georgia.

Timeline of elections procedures related to the 1 October Parliamentary Elections in Georgia.

August 5 – Deadline for applying to Central Election Commission for registration to run in the October 1 parliamentary elections for those political parties which have a member in the sitting Parliament; CEC should register an applicant party or in case of inaccuracy in an application should notify party about it within two days.

August 5 – Deadline expires for a five-member "initiative group", which wants to nominate an independent majoritarian candidate in a single-mandate constituency, to apply for registration to respective District Election Commission (DEC); unlike previous elections in 2008, when only parties or election blocs were eligible to nominate majoritarian MP candidates, now independent candidates, nominated by an initiative group, will also be able to run in single-mandate constituencies. But independent candidates will have post GEL 5,000 as deposit, which they will only be able to retrieve if they garner at least 10% of votes. DEC should register an applicant initiative group within a day or in case of inaccuracy in an application should immediately inform about it an applicant. Registered initiative groups should then collect signatures of supporters and submit it to respective DEC no later than August 12.

August 6 – CEC publishes on its website total number of voters, who will be eligible to cast ballot in the October 1 parliamentary elections; the data should also include number of votes in each of the 73 election districts;

August 15 – A political party, which neither has a member in the sitting Parliament nor is "a qualified party" (those which have cleared, separately or together with others in an electoral bloc, a 4% threshold in parliamentary elections and a 3% threshold in local self-government elections) should submit signatures of at least 25,000 supporters to CEC; those parties which do not a member in the sitting Parliament, but are "qualified parties" will have to collect signatures of 1,000 supporters.

August 19 – Deadline expires for submitting application for those parties, which plan to unite in an election bloc to run jointly under party-list, proportional system.

August 21 – Deadline for a registration of election blocs by CEC.

September 1 – Deadline expires for the political parties and election blocs to submit to CEC their party-lists – list of candidates who will be running in elections under the proportional system.

September 6 – CEC should register party-lists or in case of inaccuracies should notify about it party or election bloc.

September 6 – DECs should register majoritarian MP candidates nominated by political parties and election blocs or notify entities in case of inaccuracies in their applications.

September 1 – CEC is setting up election precincts in foreign countries based on data provided by the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

September 10 – Deadline expires for registration of those voters in precincts in foreign countries, which are not registered with the Georgian consulate in a respective country.

September 18 – Starting from this date making any change in the voters list will only be possible through court's ruling.

September 21 – deadline for local organizations to apply to CEC for registration to monitor the elections. CEC should decide whether to register applicant organization within five days.

September 24 – Deadline for international observer organizations to apply to CEC for registration to monitor the elections. CEC has to take decision on application no later than September 26.

September 28 – Deadline for media representatives to apply for accreditation to CEC.

October 1 – Election Day; polling stations open for voters at 8 a.m. and close at 8 p.m.

October 12 – Deadline for District Election Commissions to summarize vote tallies based on results from precincts.

October 15 – Second round of majoritarian MP elections will be held in those single-mandate constituencies where none of the candidate garners more than 30% of votes in the first round. On the same day repeat election should be held in case results of the October 1 vote are annulled in any of the constituency.

October 20 – Deadline for CEC to summarize final vote tally of the elections. ■

Source: CEW with the Central Elections Commission of Georgia and Civil.ge