



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

GEORGIA

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
26 OCTOBER 2024

ODIHR Election Observation Mission
Final Report



Warsaw
20 December 2024

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following an invitation from the authorities of Georgia and in accordance with its mandate, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) deployed an Election Observation Mission (EOM) to observe the 26 October parliamentary elections. The ODIHR EOM assessed the compliance of the electoral process with OSCE commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections, and national legislation. For election day, the ODIHR EOM was joined by delegations from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly to form an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM).

In its Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions issued on 27 October, the IEOM concluded that while the elections “offered voters a wide choice with 18 candidate lists, they unfolded amid entrenched polarization in an environment marred by concerns over recently adopted legislation, its impact on fundamental freedoms and civil society. Contestants could generally campaign freely while campaign rhetoric and imagery was highly divisive. Reports of pressure on voters, particularly on public sector employees, remained widespread in the campaign. This, coupled with extensive tracking of voters on election day, raised concerns about the ability of some voters to cast their vote without fear of retribution. The legal framework provides an adequate basis for democratic elections, but recent frequent amendments marked a step backwards, raising concerns over its potential use for political gain. Preparations for the elections were well-administered, including extensive voter education on the use of new voting technologies. A significant imbalance in financial resources and advantage of incumbency contributed to an already uneven playing field. The polarized media environment and instrumentalization of private outlets for political propaganda affected impartial news coverage, hindering voters’ ability to make an informed choice. Effectiveness of campaign finance oversight was undermined by limited enforcement, and concerns over the impartiality and political instrumentalization of the oversight body. The underrepresentation of women on party lists and in the campaign demonstrates a need for greater commitment to ensure adequate involvement in political life. Election day was generally procedurally well-organized and administered in an orderly manner but marked by a tense environment, with frequent compromises in vote secrecy and several procedural inconsistencies, as well as reports of intimidation and pressure on voters that negatively impacted public trust in the process.”

Overall, the legal framework provides an adequate basis for conducting democratic elections. However, it is overly complex, and retains gaps and inconsistencies. Moreover, since 2020, the framework has undergone over 20 revisions, several marking a step backwards, including those adopted shortly before the elections without broad cross-party support. Such frequent and last-minute changes undermined legal stability and raised concerns about potential misuse for political gain, contrary to OSCE commitments and international good practice. While earlier amendments addressed several ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations and were adopted following public consultations, the most recent 2024 amendments including those that abolished the gender quota on parliamentary candidate lists and altered the CEC’s composition and decision-making process to bypass the two-thirds majority requirement in repeat voting, were introduced without an inclusive consultative process or broad

¹ The English version of this report is the only official document. An unofficial translation is available in Georgian.

political consensus. Several longstanding recommendations from ODIHR and the Venice Commission remained unaddressed, including those related to the impartiality of election administration, comprehensive regulations to prevent misuse of administrative resources, oversight of campaign and campaign finance, media, and electoral dispute resolution.

The election administration efficiently managed the technical aspects of the elections. The CEC held regular live-streamed sessions, promptly published all relevant materials online, and organized extensive training and voter information campaigns. However, the public perception of its impartiality was undermined by recent legal amendments that shifted control over the selection and nomination of its members to the ruling party, abolished the opposition-nominated deputy chairperson position, and reduced the requirement for political consensus in its work, as well as perceived links between non-partisan members and the ruling party. Decision-making within election commissions was not always collegial, with opposition-appointed members raising concerns about limited information sharing and instances of marginalization, including after election day. Allegations of ruling-party affiliation at all levels further eroded public trust. Positively, the CEC took numerous steps to improve the accessibility of the electoral process for persons with disabilities; however, significant issues with accessibility at many polling stations remain unaddressed.

For the first time, electronic devices were introduced in most polling stations for voter identification, vote counting, and the transmission of preliminary results. While most stakeholders considered this as a positive measure to increase trust in the integrity of election day proceedings, however, diverting from international good practice the CEC did not give key stakeholders full access to the processes and documentation related to the devices and the respective audit reports were released only after election day, limiting transparency and fuelling concerns about the devices' vulnerabilities and potential misuse to disclose voter identities. Despite considerable efforts by the election administration to inform voters about the use of new technologies, many voters on election day faced difficulties using electronic devices and were not properly instructed, leading to frequent instances of compromised vote secrecy.

Citizens declared legally incapacitated by a court decision and placed in institutional care were denied the right to vote, contrary to international standards. Voters with expired ID documents or without a registered address, who did not have a valid passport either, were excluded from voter lists, at odds with international standards. The CEC offered several options for verifying voter registration data and requesting corrections, both in person and online. While most ODIHR EOM interlocutors did not express significant concerns about the accuracy or inclusiveness of the voter lists before election day, some questioned the legitimacy of multiple registrations at the same addresses involving voters unknown to the actual residents. After election day, the opposition alleged the misuse of voter data, including that of citizens residing abroad. The election administration denied these allegations but declined to provide access to the list of voters who participated, citing the lack of legal provisions.

Party and candidate registration was generally inclusive, with the CEC registering 1,184 candidates across 18 political party lists. However, existing restrictions, such as the in-country residency requirement, limitations on individuals deprived of candidacy rights or sentenced to imprisonment by court decision, and the lack of provisions for independent candidacy, are inconsistent with OSCE commitments, international standards, and good practice. In addition, at odds with previous ODIHR recommendations, the official campaign period began more than a month before the conclusion of candidate registration; the overlap of these periods led to disputes over the allocation of free airtime in the media and discrepancies in financial reporting periods.

Party programmes largely lacked specific messaging for women, and most parties featured few women in their campaigns. While women constituted a majority in most lower-level election commissions, they made up only 4 of the 17 CEC members. Despite constitutional provisions requiring the state to take

special measures to ensure gender equality, legal amendments adopted in 2024 abolished mandatory gender quotas on parliamentary candidate lists. The repeal of this positive measure, combined with existing underrepresentation of women in elected positions, as well as entrenched stereotypes, internal challenges within political parties, and gender-specific threats, had a significant negative impact on women's political participation. As a result, only 29 percent of party list candidates were women, with most of them in non-electable positions, marking a substantial decrease from the 2020 elections. Among the elected members of parliament, 34 are women, representing a 23 percent of the total.

Contestants were generally able to campaign freely, and 18 candidate lists competed in a subdued campaign. However, reports of intimidation, coercion, inducement and pressure on voters, especially public sector employees and the economically vulnerable persisted, raising concerns about the ability of some voters to freely form their opinions and cast their votes without fear of retribution, at odds with OSCE commitments and international standards. Campaign rhetoric and imagery were highly divisive, and both ruling and opposition parties reported isolated incidents of violence, event disruptions, and damage to campaign materials. Representatives of the ruling party made public statements about their plans to ban the key opposition parties, including by applying to the Constitutional Court, contrary to the principle of democratic pluralism. Campaigning by high-level and local officials, financial incentives for diverse social groups as well as a government amnesty programme, while not against the law, provided an undue advantage of incumbency, and questioned the government's genuine commitment to preventing voter influence through state resources.

The ruling party held a significant financial advantage over its competitors in terms of state funding, private donations, and campaign spending. The 2023 legal amendments reduced the annual expenditure cap for political parties and prohibited donations from legal entities, addressing some previous ODIHR recommendations; however, issues related to third-party campaigning and the absence of the legally prescribed publication of the oversight body's conclusions before election day remain unaddressed. Legislative shortcomings and inconsistent enforcement undermined the transparency and effectiveness of party and campaign finance oversight, now overseen by the newly established Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) since 2023. The ACB's application of legal provisions was selective and inconsistent, particularly in designating certain civil society organizations as entities "with a declared electoral goal", subjecting them to the same financial regulations as electoral contestants. These designations were later withdrawn following a government request, raising concerns about political interference in the ACB's operations.

The media landscape is diverse yet highly polarized, with much of its funding tied to party-affiliated individuals, undermining independent news production and contrary to international standards. The safety of journalists remains a major concern, highlighted by a number of recent assaults, acts of intimidation, and pressure on them, including on election day. The narrow interpretation of restrictive campaign provisions by the media regulator and the courts resulted in sanctions against broadcasters and limited opposition parties' ability to campaign in the media. The ODIHR EOM media monitoring revealed clear political bias across all monitored TV stations, with commercial television not implementing legal obligations for impartial news coverage. The public broadcaster covered all parties predominantly in a positive or neutral tone but devoted significantly more time to the ruling party in the news. The instrumentalization of commercial television for political propaganda undermined independent journalism and amplified divisive political rhetoric. In addition, the absence of impartial analysis of party programmes and the refusal by key political actors to participate in debates challenged voters' ability to make an informed choice.

While the law provides for remedies for election disputes, the effectiveness of dispute resolution remained limited due to restrictions on voters' legal standing, procedural shortcomings, ambiguities in the legislation and inconsistencies in its application. Before election day, more than 200 complaints

were filed with election commissions regarding the appointment and operation of Precinct Election Commissions (PECs), alleged misuse of administrative resources, and campaign violations. Most decisions were made by election commission chairpersons rather than the full commissions, undermining collegiality and reducing transparency, contrary to prior ODIHR recommendations. Many complaints were dismissed as unsubstantiated, often without adequate investigation of the merits. The trust in the law enforcement, the election administration, and the judiciary to effectively and impartially adjudicate politically sensitive matters remained low throughout the electoral period.

The law provides for election observation by citizen and international observers, contributing to a vibrant observation scene. However, the adoption of the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, along with the threat of sanctions for non-compliance, although the latter not used before the elections, had a stigmatizing effect on many organizations. This coupled with reported incidents of attacks and intimidation, has impacted their ability to operate in an environment free from undue pressure. Further, some groups faced targeted discrediting efforts by state authorities and ruling party structures, being labelled as foreign or opposition agents, aimed at undermining their credibility. On election day, several citizen observer groups reported instances of intimidation against their representatives, obstacles to their work, and the presence of individuals at polling stations registered as observers who acted on behalf of contestants, mainly the ruling party.

Procedurally, election day was generally orderly administered but marked by a tense atmosphere and widespread intimidation of voters, as well as of citizen observers. ODIHR observers noted numerous indications of pressure on voters, reports of many voters feeling pressured, tracking by ruling party structures and affiliates, and overcrowding at many polling stations. In numerous cases, 24 per cent of observations, vote secrecy was potentially compromised due to the manner of ballot insertion into ballot boxes, inadequate polling station layouts, and marks visible on the back of ballots. Additionally, ruling party representatives frequently video-recorded the voting process, which may have had an intimidating effect on voters. The counting process revealed procedural omissions, including improper handling of unused ballots, failure to announce votes aloud, and inconsistencies in determining ballot validity. Handling of results protocols at District Election Commissions (DECs) was inconsistent. While preliminary results were promptly published online by the CEC, key data, such as voter turnout per polling station and the number of invalid votes, were not made available in a user-friendly format.

Following the release of preliminary results, the opposition rejected the outcome, citing irregularities such as voter intimidation, vote buying, and alleged foreign interference. In the following days, citizen observer organizations and the opposition claimed that these irregularities pointed to coordinated manipulation, while the government, the ruling party, and the CEC denied these claims. Over 1,200 complaints were filed by parties and observer organizations, but most were dismissed by DEC's after limited investigation, with courts upholding the majority of these decisions following minimal scrutiny of the cases. Appeals against electoral results submitted to the CEC, courts, and the Constitutional Court were dismissed. Overall, the handling of post-election day complaints by election commissions and courts undermined the right to due process, failed to provide an effective remedy, and did not comprehensively address widespread concerns about the integrity of election results. All elected opposition members of the parliament relinquished their seats or boycotted the opening session. Further, of serious concern, starting in late November, demonstrations against a government decision to postpone EU negotiation talks led to violent clashes with law enforcement and mass-arrests, challenging protesters' rights to freedom of assembly and deepening the political crisis. On 14 December, a GD-dominated electoral college elected Mikheil Kavelashvili as president amid ongoing protests, with President Zourabichvili, the opposition, and civil society rejecting the legitimacy of the process.

This report offers a number of recommendations to support efforts to bring elections in Georgia closer in line with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic

elections. Priority recommendations include preventing voter intimidation, pressure on public employees, vote buying, and electoral violence; undertaking a comprehensive legislative review to align the legal framework with international standards; revising the appointment process for election commission members to prevent dominance by any single political party and fully ensure efficiency; developing clear regulations for political finance oversight; introducing measures to ensure the independence of the media regulatory body; ensuring efficiency and transparency in election dispute resolution; allowing for citizen observers to operate without pressure or intimidation; and guaranteeing vote secrecy through procedural safeguards. ODIHR stands ready to assist in addressing immediate post-election concerns and working to improve future elections by addressing the recommendations contained in this and previous reports, including through a comprehensive review of the electoral legislation.

II. INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Following an invitation from the authorities of Georgia to observe the 26 October 2024 parliamentary elections and in accordance with its mandate, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) established an Election Observation Mission (EOM) on 11 September. The mission, led by Mr. Eoghan Murphy, consisted of a 12-member core team based in Tbilisi and 30 long-term observers (LTOs) deployed on 19 September to 13 locations around the country. The ODIHR EOM members remained in the country until 10 November to follow post-election-day developments.

For election day, the ODIHR EOM was joined by delegations from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the European Parliament (EP), and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) to form an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM). Mr. Pascal Allizard was appointed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office as Special Co-ordinator and Leader of the OSCE short-term observer mission. Ms. Pia Kauma headed the OSCE PA delegation, Mr. Iulian Bulai headed the PACE delegation, Mr. Antonio López-Istúriz White headed the EP delegation, and Mr. Faik Öztrak headed the NATO PA delegation. The IEOM deployed 530 observers from 42 OSCE participating States on election day, including 362 long-term and short-term observers by ODIHR, a 60-member delegation from the OSCE PA, a 39-member delegation from PACE, a 12-member delegation from the EP and a 38-member delegation from the NATO PA; 47 per cent of the IEOM observers were women. Opening was observed in 223 polling stations and voting was observed in 1,924 polling stations across the country. Counting was observed in 193 polling stations, and the intake of results protocols in 73 District Election Commissions (DECs).

The ODIHR EOM assessed compliance of the election process with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections and domestic legislation. This final report follows a Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions that was released at a press conference on 27 October.²

The ODIHR EOM wishes to thank the authorities of Georgia for their invitation to observe the elections, and the Central Election Commission (CEC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their assistance. It also expresses appreciation to other state institutions, the judiciary, political parties, media, civil society organizations, international community representatives, and other interlocutors for their co-operation and for sharing their views.

² See previous ODIHR election reports on [Georgia](#).

III. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

On 27 August, in line with the Constitution, the president called parliamentary elections for 26 October. These were the first elections since Georgia had been granted European Union (EU) candidacy status in December 2023, though the accession process was *de facto* halted by the EU in June 2024, citing concerns over democratic backsliding.³

The political landscape has been dominated by the ruling Georgian Dream (GD), in power since 2012, which maintains a strong influence across political and public life, and has exercised extensive control over state institutions. In the 2020 parliamentary elections, 9 political parties and coalitions secured mandates, with GD winning 90 of 150 seats. The United National Movement (UNM)-led coalition became the largest opposition faction with 36 mandates.⁴ In the following years, the opposition landscape became fragmented due to intra-party instabilities. For these elections, most opposition parties united into three coalitions: the “Coalition for Change” (*Ahali, Girchi* – More Freedom, *Droa!*, and Republican Party), “Strong Georgia” (“Strong Georgia – *Lelo*”, For the People, Freedom Square, and Citizens), and “Unity – to Save Georgia” (UNM, European Georgia [EG] and *Strategy Aghmashenebeli* [SA]).⁵

The elections took place amidst entrenched political polarization, marked by deep antagonism between the ruling party and the government on one side and most opposition parties and the president on the other.⁶ This divide was amplified by broad social discontent due to the adoption of various legislation. In 2023 and 2024, large-scale protests emerged against the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, initially withdrawn in 2023, but eventually adopted in May 2024.⁷ Many ODIHR EOM interlocutors reported violence and intimidation against the protesters, civil society, and journalists during and immediately following the protests.⁸ On 17 September, the parliament adopted the Law on Protection

³ Georgia applied for EU membership in March 2022 and received candidate status in December 2023, contingent on taking the steps outlined in the European Commission’s (EC) [recommendations](#). The June 2024 [conclusions](#) of the European Council stated that the adoption of the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence represents backsliding on these steps, *de facto* leading to a halt of the process. In its October 2024 [Enlargement Report](#), the EC stated that it is “not in a position to consider recommending” opening EU accession negotiations with Georgia.

⁴ Other parties were: European Georgia (EG) with 5 seats; “Strong Georgia – *Lelo*” with 4; *Strategy Aghmashenebeli* (SA) with 4; Alliance of Patriots (AoP) with 4; *Girchi* with 4; Citizens with 2; and the Labour Party (LP) with 1.

⁵ Pre-electoral blocs are not envisioned by the law; blocs registered candidates on the lists of their leading parties.

⁶ Following the 2017 constitutional amendments, which concluded the shift from a presidential to a parliamentary system initiated in 2010, the outgoing President, Salome Zourabichvili was the last directly elected president. Although endorsed by GD as the presidential candidate, Salome Zourabichvili grew increasingly alienated from the party following the 2020 parliamentary elections. In October 2023, GD made an unsuccessful attempt to impeach her for unauthorized foreign visits. However, the party lacked the necessary 100 parliamentary votes to proceed with impeachment.

⁷ The law introduced new registration, reporting, and public disclosure requirements for civil society organizations (CSOs) and media with more than 20 per cent of their non-commercial revenue from foreign sources, labelling them as “organizations pursuing the interests of a foreign power”. Various CSOs and media [announced](#) that they would not register, arguing that the law is unconstitutional and constitutes stigmatization. More than 100 CSOs announced that they would halt cooperation with the government in all formats. Of the 476 CSOs that had applied for the status of “organization pursuing the interests of a foreign power” by the legal deadline of 2 September, 382 were officially registered as such by the National Agency of Public Registry of the Ministry of Justice as of beginning of December.

⁸ See critical assessments of the law in the [opinion](#) by ODIHR, the [opinion](#) by the Council of Europe’s Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), a [statement](#) by the OSCE PA, a [statement](#) by the High Representative with the European Commission, a [declaration](#) by the NATO PA, as well as a [statement](#) by the director of ODIHR. In July, the president, along with 38 MPs and over 120 civil society and media organizations, challenged the law at the Constitutional Court and requested provisional measures to suspend its enforcement. On 9 October, the Court ruled the case admissible but did not suspend applicability. On 17 October, 16 media organizations, 120 civil society organizations, and four individuals filed a joint complaint with the European Court of Human Rights, alleging non-compliance with the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Convention.

of Family Values and Minors, which introduced measures that discriminate against the LGBTI community. The adoption of these laws has had a negative impact on the public perception of civil society organizations and independent media, as well as LGBTI community and limit freedom of association, assembly and expression, contrary to Georgia’s international obligations and OSCE commitments.⁹

Legislation that imposes limitations on the constitutionally guaranteed fundamental freedoms of assembly and expression should be repealed. Any restrictions on such fundamental freedoms must be exceptional, strictly proportionate to a legitimate aim, and imposed only to the extent necessary in a democratic society.

Women’s representation in elected positions remains low, and recent reforms represent a step back and negatively impact gender representation in politics. Despite constitutional provisions requiring the state to take special measures to ensure gender equality, in May 2024, the parliament abolished mandatory gender quotas and other temporary measures aimed at increasing women’s political participation, leading to a significant decline in the number of women candidates in these elections.¹⁰ Women held 19 per cent of seats in the outgoing parliament, 3 out of 64 mayoral positions, and only 2 out of 12 ministerial posts.¹¹ While some political parties pledged to adhere to voluntary internal gender quotas, only 341 of the 1,184 parliamentary candidates (29 per cent) were women. This marks a significant decrease from the 44 per cent observed in the 2020 parliamentary elections when the gender quota requirement was in place. Women led only 3 out of 18 lists and constituted 22 per cent of candidates in the top 10 positions.¹² This systemic underrepresentation, along with the repeal of positive legislative measures and the persistent obstacles faced by women politicians, including gender-specific threats, continues to hinder women’s participation in political and public life.¹³ Of the 150 elected candidates, only 34 are women (23 per cent), marking a slight increase from the previous composition, which was initially 21 per cent and decreased to 19 per cent over the term.

In line with international standards and OSCE commitments, authorities should put in place effective temporary special measures to eliminate discrimination against women in public and political life. Given their proven effectiveness, the authorities should give particular consideration to re-introducing the mandatory electoral gender quotas as well as the requirement that a woman withdrawing from her mandate as Member of Parliament be replaced by the next woman candidate on the same party list.

⁹ The law bans gender reassignment, adoption by non-heterosexual individuals and gatherings or the dissemination of information in schools that “aim to popularize” non-heterosexual relationships. The [Venice Commission](#), the [European Union External Action Service](#), and the [UN Human Rights Office spokesperson](#) criticized the law.

¹⁰ *Girchi* MPs, who initiated the amendments, secured the ruling party’s support in exchange for their votes for the candidate supported by GD for the CEC chairperson. Representatives of the ruling party argued that gender quotas are a form of positive discrimination that have already achieved their main task. See the ODIHR [opinion](#) which states that “Without introducing alternative forms of temporary special measures or other recognized mechanisms to accelerate women’s political representation in Georgia, this represents a setback for the advancement of gender equality in Georgia, not in line with international human rights standards and OSCE commitments which mandate the elimination of discrimination against women in political and public life.” See also the Venice Commission [opinion](#), which argued against the abolition of gender quotas.

¹¹ The percentage of women in the parliament remains below the [average](#) for OSCE participating states (32 per cent as of October 2024), and below the [global average](#) of 27 per cent.

¹² The Party of Georgian Unity and Development and “Change Georgia” had the highest representation of women candidates, at 52 and 51 per cent, respectively. “For Georgia” had 45 per cent women candidates. In the “Strong Georgia” coalition, women made up 30 per cent, while on the “Coalition for Change” list, women constituted 26 per cent. In the “Unity – to Save Georgia” coalition, the figure was 23 per cent. On the GD list, 16 per cent of the candidates were women, with only two in the top 10 and none between positions 21 and 51.

¹³ According to the 2022 [UN Report on Violence Against Women in Politics in Georgia](#), “[m]ore than half of the [women] respondents (54 per cent) have experienced some form of harassment or violence during their tenure as an appointed official or during their campaign work. [...] The most common forms of violence against women in politics are psychological violence and violence on social media.”

IV. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Georgia is a party to international and regional instruments related to the holding of democratic elections.¹⁴ Parliamentary elections are governed by the 1995 Constitution, the 2011 Election Code, the 1997 Law on Political Unions of Citizens (LPU), and regulations of the Central Election Commission (CEC).¹⁵ The Election Code has been amended over 20 times since the last parliamentary elections, most recently in June 2024. Despite the frequent changes, the amendments did not address a long-standing ODIHR recommendations to provide a comprehensive legal reform.

The 2022 amendments, adopted through consultations and cross-party support, introduced the widespread use of electronic technologies, addressed some previous ODIHR and Council of Europe's Venice Commission recommendations related to the impartiality of lower-level election bodies and citizen observers, established additional grounds for automatic recounts of polling station results, extended some election dispute resolution deadlines, and added further regulations on campaign finance reporting and accountability. Amendments adopted in 2023, which extended the application of the gender quotas on candidate lists until 2032, received support across party lines. In contrast, amendments that banned donations from legal entities to political parties, lowered the annual expenditure cap, and removed the need for broader consensus in the nomination and appointment of non-partisan CEC members and the chairperson were solely supported by the ruling party and its affiliates.¹⁶

Amendments adopted in 2024 were enacted without an inclusive consultative process or broad political support. These abolished gender quotas on parliamentary candidate lists, modified the decision-making process within the election administration by allowing the CEC to bypass the two-thirds majority requirement in repeat voting, eliminated the position of the opposition-nominated deputy chairperson of the CEC, further revised the procedure for appointing CEC members, and expanded the powers of the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB).¹⁷ Furthermore, these amendments disregarded concerns raised by key stakeholders as well as ODIHR and the Venice Commission, and reversed provisions previously implemented in line with recommendations from these organizations, such as the application of gender quotas, the consensus-based appointment of CEC members, and safeguards for the decision-making process within the CEC.¹⁸

Overall, the legal framework provides an adequate basis for conducting democratic elections. However, frequent revisions to the legal framework, some made shortly before the elections and without broad cross-party support, undermined its stability and raised concerns about the potential for political

¹⁴ Georgia is a party to the 1965 [International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#), the 1966 [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), the 1979 [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#), and the 2006 [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#).

¹⁵ Other relevant laws include the 1984 Administrative Offences Code, the 1999 Criminal Code, the 1999 Code of Administrative Procedure, the 1999 General Administrative Code, and the 2004 Law on Broadcasting.

¹⁶ Following an EU-brokered April 2021 [agreement](#) between GD and several opposition parties, the 2021 amendments introduced a consensus-seeking procedure for the election of the CEC non-partisan members and the chairperson, based on nominations by the president. The 2023 amendments were vetoed by the president; the veto was subsequently overridden by the parliament. See the 2023 ODIHR and Venice Commission [Joint Opinion](#).

¹⁷ Paragraph 5.8 of the 1990 OSCE [Copenhagen Document](#) states that the legislation should be adopted at the end of a public procedure. The president vetoed the 2024 amendments, except for those related to powers of the ACB, but the veto was then overridden by parliament. Only one amendment package, which included the removal of the gender quota, was supported by one opposition party, while all other opposition parties boycotted the voting.

¹⁸ See the 2023 ODIHR and Venice Commission [Joint Opinion](#) and the 2024 [Follow-up Opinion](#), which stated that "amendments are clearly insufficient to ensure a consensus-based political process crucial for the independence and impartiality of the CEC and for public trust in this institution".

manipulation, contrary to OSCE commitments and international good practice.¹⁹ Moreover, the law is overly complex, lacks clarity in some areas, and retains gaps and inconsistencies, which at times led to diverging implementations by stakeholders.²⁰ Further, several longstanding ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations remain unaddressed. These relate to the nomination and appointment of election commission members, voter and candidate eligibility, comprehensive regulations to prevent the misuse of administrative resources and pressure on voters, strengthening regulations on campaign finance and campaigning in the media, and reinforcing the framework for electoral dispute resolution.

A comprehensive legislative reform should be undertaken to implement outstanding ODIHR recommendations and further align the legal framework with OSCE commitments, international standards, and good practice. This review should be completed well in advance of the next election and through an inclusive and transparent consultative process.

Pursuant to the 2017 constitutional amendments, these were the first parliamentary elections conducted under a fully proportional electoral system. The 150-member unicameral parliament is directly elected for a four-year term within a single nationwide constituency with closed candidate lists. Political parties must surpass a five per cent threshold to qualify for seat allocation. Legal amendments in 2024 reduced the minimum required number of candidates on party lists from 60 to 30, and permitted political parties to indicate certain candidates as delegates representing voters from one of 30 designated districts.²¹

V. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The elections were administered by the CEC, 73 District Election Commissions (DECs), and 3,111 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs).²² All commissions are composed of eight non-partisan members and up to nine members nominated by parties represented in parliament. The CEC and DECs are permanent bodies, while PECs are temporary bodies formed ahead of each election. By law, non-partisan members have to meet requirements aimed to ensure their impartiality, and be certified for their

¹⁹ Section II.2.b of the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission 2002 [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#) (Code of Good Practice) states that “fundamental elements of electoral law, in particular the electoral system proper, membership of electoral commissions [...] should not be open to amendment less than one year before an election”, while paragraph 64 of its explanatory report stresses that “care must be taken to avoid [...] even the mere semblance of manipulation”. The 2024 Venice Commission [Revised Interpretative Declaration](#) suggests that amendments within a year to elections are permissible if they are in accordance with international electoral standards and based “on consensus between government and opposition and on broad public consultations”.

²⁰ The legislation includes references to provisions that no longer exist or are not applicable. For instance, Articles 51 and 186 of the Election Code refer to an abrogated article of the LPU to determine which electoral subjects are eligible for free airtime. The law also contains numerous provisional norms adopted for specific elections, many of which are now obsolete. The two-week deadline provided in Article 125(17) of the Election Code for repeat elections does not allow sufficient time to organize elections if results are invalidated due to complaints. Article 45(3.1) imposes a ban on campaigning by law-enforcement personnel but not on personnel of the Special Investigation Service. Certain concepts are ambiguous, such as ‘campaigning to serve the goals of another electoral subject’, ‘donations to refrain from supporting another electoral subject’, and ‘persons with declared electoral goals’. Eligibility rules for free airtime are also insufficiently defined for situations where electoral blocs are not permitted. These have at times led to broad discretionary interpretations by enforcement bodies and courts, resulting in disputes and sanctions (see *Media, Campaign Finance, and Election Dispute Resolution*).

²¹ Contesting parties may designate a candidate as a ‘delegate’ from specified districts. If elected, such a member of parliament will represent the inhabitants of that district, provided the designating party received the highest number of valid votes in that district. For the 2024 elections, only Georgian Dream (GD) made use of this opportunity.

²² Including 67 polling stations in 42 countries where out-of-country voting was organized. Additional in-country PECs were formed in 13 electoral precincts established in penal institutions and an in-patient facility. Elections were not held in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, territories currently not under the control of the government. See the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) 2024 [judgement](#) in case of Georgia v. Russia.

position, which, for the first time, was also required at the PEC level.²³ Women constituted the majority in most of the lower-level commissions; however, only 4 of the 17 CEC members were women.²⁴

Most DEC and PECs were established within the legal deadlines, despite the short time for processing applications, but the pool of candidates was limited, with only one per cent surplus at the PEC level, resulting in minimal competition for most vacant posts.²⁵ Several political parties reported difficulties in recruiting PEC members, and many DEC and PECs experienced significant turnover in membership, often after training was completed. DEC attributed this to low remuneration, insufficient understanding of PEC members' roles, and, in some cases, reluctance to represent political parties. Political parties also cited fear of pressure from local authorities and supporters of other parties as reasons for withdrawals.²⁶ Non-partisan PEC members can withdraw or be replaced any time, which resulted in insufficient training for many replacements, negatively affecting their performance on election day, contrary to international good practice.²⁷

To ensure stability and professional capacity of the election administration, the possibility to replace members of District Election Commission and Precinct Election Commission should be limited within a reasonable period of time prior to election day to allow for all members to undergo training.

The election administration managed technical preparations in a timely and efficient manner. Contributing to transparency, the CEC held regular live-streamed sessions and promptly published its decisions and other relevant materials online. However, its decision-making at times lacked collegiality, with opposition members reporting insufficient information sharing and marginalization. As a result, they frequently abstained from voting on contentious issues, allowing decisions to pass by a simple majority.²⁸ Party-appointed members had minimal involvement in the DEC and PEC work before election day, and the high number of party-appointed PEC members led to overcrowding at polling stations, which did not enhance efficiency of their work. While most ODIHR EOM interlocutors had confidence in the election administration's technical and organizational capacities, many raised concerns over their impartiality due to recent amendments which vested control over the selection and nomination process of CEC members to the ruling party, removed the need for consensus in its decision-

²³ Non-partisan members cannot be election contestants, their representatives, observers, media representatives, or if, in the last two general elections, they were appointed by a party as a commission member or representative, were contestants, or have been political party donors since the last general elections.

²⁴ Women constituted 67 per cent of DEC members and 73 per cent of PEC members, holding 55 per cent of leadership positions in DEC and 78 per cent of PECs.

²⁵ For the election period, the five permanent members at each DEC were joined by three temporary non-partisan and up to nine party-nominated members. The CEC received 263 applications for 219 vacant positions of temporary non-partisan DEC members. In 56 per cent of DEC, the CEC received the exact number of applications as vacancies. Within a four-day period, DEC selected 24,047 non-partisan PEC members from 24,425 applicants. For the 9,090 PEC leadership positions, DEC received 9,111 applications. The competitions for numerous vacancies were relaunched due to the insufficient number of candidacies and resignations.

²⁶ The ODIHR EOM noted that some party-appointed members in the districts of Ambrolauri, Bolnisi, Mtskheta-Mtianeti (Tbilisi) and Sagarejo were unaware of their appointments or who nominated them.

²⁷ See paragraph II.3.1.g of the [Code of Good Practice](#) which states that “[m]embers of electoral commissions must receive standard training”.

²⁸ The 2024 amendments changed the requirement for CEC decision-making, to allow for re-voting on issues with a simple majority at the same session, if support of at least two-thirds of the full membership cannot be reached. Several CEC regulations were controversial, with some appealed to the court (see *Election Dispute Resolution*). For example, the CEC moved the deadline for assigning PEC responsibilities to seven days before election day, citing the need for “timely and uniform” implementation of procedures. However, the opposition raised concerns that earlier assignments could expose PEC members in key roles to pressure from the ruling party. The CEC's implementation of provisions on out-of-country voting, opening polling stations at diplomatic missions, also drew criticism for restricting access to voting abroad. After election day, opposition CEC members contested some procurement decisions, citing the poor quality of ballot papers. Many stakeholders also criticized the lack of transparency in CEC decisions on auditing electronic devices.

making process, as well as perceived links between non-partisan members and the ruling party at all levels.²⁹

To strengthen impartiality of election administration, the appointment process for election commission members at all levels should be revised to prevent dominance by any single political party. To enhance operational efficiency and prevent overcrowding, the number of commissioners, particularly at the Precinct Election Commission level, should be adjusted to the actual needs.

The election administration prepared a comprehensive training programme for electoral personnel, contestants, media representatives, and civil society organizations (CSOs). While the training was mandatory, participation among party-appointed PEC members was low.³⁰ Sessions observed by the ODIHR EOM were informative and interactive, but did not sufficiently cover all pre-election responsibilities of PECs, leading to inconsistencies in the implementation of certain procedures.³¹ The CEC organized extensive voter information and education campaigns, featuring in-person meetings, audio-visual materials in the media and online, as well as mock election days, focusing on the verification of voter registration data, voting procedures with electronic devices, and ballot validity.

The CEC made numerous steps to improve the accessibility of the electoral process for persons with various types of disabilities, including through making adjustments to its website, providing voter information materials in accessible formats, and offering assistive tools in polling stations. Voter education materials included sign-language interpretation and videos for citizens with hearing impairments. Despite these efforts, long-standing deficiencies in the physical accessibility of electoral premises, including DEC offices and polling stations, persisted (see *Election Day*).

In a coordinated effort, state and local authorities, along with all other relevant stakeholders, should undertake necessary measures to ensure independent access for persons with various disabilities throughout the entire election process, including the allocation of adequate premises for election commissions and polling stations.

VI. VOTING TECHNOLOGIES

Pursuant to the 2022 legal amendments that introduced the widespread use of electronic technologies at polling stations, the private vendor *Smartmatic* was selected in August 2023 to supply voter identification devices (VIDs), optical vote-counting devices (VCDs), and technical support for their configuration. For these elections, 2,263 polling stations (75 per cent) were equipped with VCDs and VIDs, covering approximately 90 per cent of the electorate, while all other polling stations used

²⁹ Recent legal amendments shifted the responsibility for the nomination of non-partisan CEC members, including the chairperson, from the president to the speaker of parliament, and abolished the position of the opposition-nominated deputy chairperson, vesting full control over the selection and nomination process of the CEC in the ruling party. Eight non-partisan CEC members, including the chairperson, are selected by the parliament from candidates nominated by the speaker through an open competition. They are elected by a three-fifths majority of all MPs, or by a simple majority if no agreement is reached in the first vote. Paragraph II.3.1 of the [Code of Good Practice](#) underlines that “an impartial body must be in charge of applying electoral law”.

³⁰ The CEC reported that only 37 per cent of PEC party-nominated members from ‘traditional’ polling stations and 46 per cent of those from polling stations equipped with technologies attended initial training sessions aimed at the full PEC composition, dropping to 32 per cent and 55 per cent, respectively, at the third stage of the training programme. Additional training after the second stage saw attendance of only 20 per cent and 24 per cent of the relevant partisan PEC members.

³¹ Various PECs visited by ODIHR EOM Long-term Observers (LTOs) showed a lack of understanding of procedures related to handling applications for changes in voter lists or voting with mobile ballot box.

traditional voter identification and voting methods.³² The CEC provided tablets at all polling stations nationwide to transmit preliminary results. By law, results from the VCDs were considered preliminary, with only the results of mandatory manual counts included in the official results protocols.³³ To familiarize voters with the new technologies, the CEC conducted extensive voter education efforts, and reported that pilot projects and information campaigns reached some 600,000 voters.³⁴ These pre-election day demonstrations demonstrated potential compromises to vote secrecy which were not rectified prior to election day. According to some citizen observers, these pre-election day pilots demonstrated potential compromises to vote secrecy, which were not rectified prior to election day (see *Election Day*).

The law does not mandate independent verification and certification of electronic technologies, which is considered international good practice.³⁵ In October 2023, the CEC commissioned a private company to conduct an audit, which confirmed that the devices complied with international standards and national legal requirements.³⁶ A follow-up audit by the same company in October 2024 found that system and functional updates made by the CEC to the software had not compromised the integrity, reliability, or security of the voting process.³⁷ However, reports about this second audit were published only after election day; the late publication prevented stakeholders from reviewing its findings in due time.³⁸

Most ODIHR EOM interlocutors supported the introduction of election technologies. Nevertheless, some raised concerns about the limited information disclosed regarding the external providers involved in implementing and auditing the devices, their activities, and terms of their contracts.³⁹ Furthermore, stakeholders did not have full access to oversee all stages of the implementation of electronic technology, review detailed documentation, and examine audits, at odds with international good practice.⁴⁰ While the election administration made additional efforts to tackle widespread misconceptions about the potential for the devices to disclose voter identity, the limited transparency

³² VIDs and VCDs were used in polling stations with at least 300 registered voters that were located in municipal centres or within a 20 km radius.

³³ Each precinct had one VID per 700 registered voters, with up to five interconnected VIDs in larger precincts. The devices scanned the machine-readable zone of the voter's electronic ID card but did not process any biometric data. Only the voter lists specific to each precinct were loaded in the respective VIDs. Each polling station was equipped with at least two ballot boxes with mounted and interconnected VCDs, with an additional one provided in precincts of over 2,700 registered voters or turnout over 1,200 voters in the previous elections. Preliminary results were transmitted to the CEC via a secure virtual private network (VPN).

³⁴ The CEC tested voting technologies in 8 by-elections since 2018 and in a nationwide mock election on 11 September in 598 electoral precincts, allowing 122,864 voters to experience the technology.

³⁵ See paragraph 8 of the 2022 Council of Europe [Guidelines on the use of information and communication technology \(ICT\) in the electoral processes \(Guidelines\)](#), which requires evaluation of the ICT systems by independent experts prior to implementation. Paragraph 33 of the 2017 CoE [Recommendation on standards for e-voting](#) states: "The components of the e-voting system shall be disclosed for verification and certification purposes."

³⁶ See the 2023 [report](#) of the audit conducted by the US-based company "Pro V&V".

³⁷ See the 2024 [audit reports](#). Conducted in three stages, the audit found that the establishment complied with the prescribed security measures, such as no internet connectivity for the VCD, only precinct-specific voter lists used by the VID, and secure transmission of results by the tablets, without the possibility of altering data. The audit's scope was limited to evaluating specific features and software modifications made since the last audit.

³⁸ All three stages of the report were published afterward even though two stages of the audit were completed before election day.

³⁹ Paragraph 7 of the 2022 Council of Europe [Guidelines](#) stipulate that "[t]ransparency requirements should aim at enabling public scrutiny. Appropriate processes should be in place for receiving, answering or discussing feedback from the public and for processing the conclusions".

⁴⁰ See paragraphs 31-33 of the 2017 [Guidelines on the implementation of the provisions of Recommendation CM/Rec\(2017\)5 on standards for e-voting](#), which specify transparency measures, including that "[p]ublic access to the components of the e-voting system and information thereon, in particular documentation, source code and non-disclosure agreements, should be disclosed to the stakeholders and the public at large, well in advance of the election period".

around the newly introduced technologies contributed to speculation about the potential misuse and vulnerabilities of VCDs (see *Election Day*).

To strengthen confidence in the use of election technologies, the law should explicitly provide for independent third-party verification and certification of voter identification and vote-counting devices. Relevant stakeholders should be granted meaningful opportunities to scrutinize all aspects of the implementation process, including access to technical documentation, source code review, device configuration, and auditing procedures.

VII. VOTER RIGHTS AND REGISTRATION

The right to vote is granted to citizens aged 18 or older on election day, except those serving a prison sentence for particularly grave crimes. Contrary to international standards and despite previous ODIHR recommendations, citizens declared legally incapacitated by a court decision and placed in institutional care are disenfranchised.⁴¹

Persons who are recognized by a court to lack legal capacity on the grounds of intellectual or psychosocial disability and those who require inpatient care should be allowed to vote, in line with international standards.

Voter registration is passive and continuous. The CEC is responsible for maintaining the unified voter list (UVL), based on data managed by the Public Service Development Agency (PSDA) and other state institutions.⁴² Voters with valid identification documents are automatically included in the UVL, based on their current or previous domicile or actual address.⁴³ However, by law, citizens with expired documents are excluded from the UVL. To restore their registration, affected citizens were required to renew their documents and submit a request for re-inclusion by 8 October.⁴⁴ The law permits voters without a registered address to remain in the UVL based on their last place of registration; this provision is temporary and set to expire in 2026.⁴⁵ Exclusion from voter lists due to expired ID documents or a lack of registered address is not in line with international standards, as it places an undue burden on citizens to restore their registration and may lead to their disenfranchisement.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Articles 12 and 29 of the 2006 [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD) oblige states to “recognize that persons with disabilities enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others”. See also the CRPD [Committee’s General Comment no. 1](#), which states that a “person’s decision-making ability cannot be a justification for any exclusion of persons with disabilities from exercising their political rights”.

⁴² Special voter lists were compiled, among others, for election officials on duty, voters in hospitals, in-patient facilities, penal institutions, or staying abroad, as well as for homebound voters. Voters abroad registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were automatically included in special voter lists; others could apply for registration until 7 October. In total, 95,910 voters were entitled to vote abroad. Mobile voting was made available for those unable to attend polling stations due to health issues, as well as for voters in penal institutions, administrative detention, hospitals, hard-to-reach areas, as well as military and security personnel on duty.

⁴³ Voters with internally displaced status are registered under their current place of residence. In absence of a registered address, voters had the opportunity to inform the PSDA of their actual address until 5 October.

⁴⁴ Following the 2023 amendments, ID cards issued prior to July 2011 with no expiration date ceased to be valid in July 2024. To ensure timely renewal of documents, the PSDA launched a large-scale campaign to issue new ID cards free of charge. According to the PSDA, 195,016 of some 260,000 affected citizens replaced their IDs by 14 October, after which the UVL closed for changes. Of the remaining citizens with expired ID cards, 25,733 held valid passports, allowing them to vote.

⁴⁵ According to the PSDA, between 12 September and 8 October, some 1,400 citizens, previously without valid documents or registered address, were included in the UVL. Between 8 and 14 October, any amendments to the UVL could be made only upon a court decision.

⁴⁶ Paragraph 11 of the [UN Human Rights Committee’s General Comment No. 25](#) requires that “States must take effective measures to ensure that all persons entitled to vote are able to exercise that right. Where registration of voters is required, it should be facilitated”.

To ensure effective exercise of active suffrage by all eligible voters, the authorities should implement appropriate legislative and administrative measures to ensure that all voters, including those lacking valid identification documents or a registered address, are included in the voter lists.

The final UVL contained 3,508,294 voters. The PSDA made continued efforts to improve the quality of voter registration data.⁴⁷ Voters had a range of opportunities to verify their information online, at government service centres, and PSDA offices, and request corrections. Preliminary voter lists were available for public scrutiny at polling stations one month before elections. According to the CEC, four political parties and two observer organizations requested copies of the UVL, but none submitted correction requests based on their verification.

While most ODIHR EOM interlocutors did not express significant concerns about the accuracy or inclusiveness of the voter lists before election day, some questioned the legitimacy of certain registrations, citing cases where multiple voters were registered at a single address but were unknown to the actual residents.⁴⁸ After the elections, the opposition alleged misuse of data from certain voters, including those residing abroad, on election day and requested access to the list of voters who cast their ballots. The election administration dismissed the allegations and denied the request, citing data protection regulations and the lack of legal grounds for providing such access.

VIII. CANDIDATE RIGHTS AND REGISTRATION

Citizens eligible to vote, who are aged 25 or older on election day and have resided in Georgia for at least 10 years, may stand for parliament. Candidate lists may only be submitted by political parties, and candidates cannot hold membership of another party.⁴⁹ The residency requirement, the restrictions for individuals deprived of candidacy rights or sentenced to imprisonment by a court decision, irrespective of the gravity of the crime, and the absence of provisions for independent candidacies are at odds with international standards, good practice, and prior ODIHR recommendations.⁵⁰

Party and candidate registration was inclusive. Parties not represented in parliament, which are required to collect at least 25,000 supporting signatures from voters, could apply to the CEC by 15 July and submit signatures by 1 August. Of the 30 non-parliamentary applicants, the CEC rejected 11 for insufficient signatures or failure to meet other requirements and dismissed 2 applications.⁵¹ Parties

⁴⁷ The PSDA improved the accuracy of the data by removing duplicates and entries of deceased voters; it contacted citizens with deficiencies in their records, conducted on-site inspections, and informed citizens whose documents were about to expire. Based on different legal grounds, it deregistered 956 citizens in the electoral period.

⁴⁸ Some voters from Didube, Nadzaladevi, and Saburtalo districts of Tbilisi and Kutaisi informed the ODIHR EOM that they had identified persons registered at their addresses who were not known to have resided there previously. The PSDA received 259 requests to deregister such individuals. The authorities attributed such records in the UVL to legal provisions allowing citizens to retain their previous registered residence for inclusion in voter lists.

⁴⁹ While pre-electoral blocs are not provided for in the legislation, several political parties opted to include candidates from other parties; these surrendered their original party membership. The CEC rejected the registration of four candidates due to their affiliation with another party or discrepancies in their mandatory statements on party affiliation submitted within the registration documentation.

⁵⁰ Paragraph 15 of the [UN Human Rights Committee General Comment No. 25](#) states that “persons who are otherwise eligible to stand for election should not be excluded by unreasonable or discriminatory requirements such as education, residence or descent, or by reason of political affiliation”. Guideline I. 1.1 c. iii the [Code of Good Practice](#) states that “a length of residence requirement may be imposed on nationals solely for local or regional elections”. Paragraph 7.5 of the 1990 [OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) provides that participating States “respect the right of citizens to seek political or public office, individually or as representatives of political parties or organisations”.

⁵¹ One party’s application was dismissed due to the cancellation of its registration by the National Agency of Public Registry, and another was dismissed because of the termination of the party chairperson’s authority.

represented in parliament were exempt from collecting support signatures and therefore entitled to a later registration deadline, and could retain their previous ordinal number on the ballot. By the 30 August deadline, ten parties represented in the parliament had applied for registration.

In total, the CEC registered 27 political parties as contestants, which could submit their candidate lists by 26 September. By the 6 October deadline, the CEC registered 18 of the 19 candidate lists submitted.⁵² While many political parties pledged to adhere to voluntary internal gender quotas, only 341 of the 1,184 parliamentary candidates (29 per cent) were women.

IX. ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN

The official 60-day campaign period, which started on 27 August, overlapped with the candidate registration period for over a month, which led to disputes over the allocation of free airtime in the media and varying financial reporting periods.⁵³ There is no campaign silence period; only broadcasting campaign advertisements and campaigning inside and near polling stations on election day are banned. The law provides for equitable campaign conditions, such as equal access to municipal venues and poster locations. However, these provisions did not fully ensure equal access in practice, as in some municipalities, opposition parties faced difficulties in obtaining poster locations.⁵⁴

In 2021, the Election Code was amended to strengthen the regulations of campaigning by public sector employees, partially in line with previous ODIHR recommendations. However, campaign regulations do not fully address the potential misuse of administrative resources, as restrictions do not apply to all public officials and permit the adoption of certain measures intended to incentivize the electorate.⁵⁵ High-level officials were observed participating in the campaign, generally in favour of the ruling party, providing an undue advantage of incumbency and blurring the line between party and state, contrary to OSCE commitments and international good practice.⁵⁶ The implementation of state and municipal projects during the campaign period is prohibited. In the months leading up to the campaign, the government introduced financial incentives for a large number of citizens from diverse social

⁵² The rejected candidate list was deficient, and the submitters failed to rectify it, resulting in fewer candidates than required.

⁵³ Candidate registration concluded 20 days before election day, following the expiration of the legal period for correcting deficiencies in submitted candidate lists. This occurred 40 days after the official campaign period began.

⁵⁴ In 10 municipalities, the opposition initially reported that most public spaces for posting campaign materials were occupied by the GD or that access to billboard space was limited, as it had already been rented out to GD. Paragraph II. B. 1.3 of the [2016 ODIHR and Venice Commission Joint Guidelines on Preventing and Responding to the Misuse of Administrative Resources during Electoral Process](#) (Joint Guidelines) provides that “[i]f public buildings and facilities are permitted for campaign purposes, the legal framework should provide for equal opportunity and a clear procedure for equitably allocating such resources to parties and candidates”.

⁵⁵ The law prohibits campaigning during state or municipality-funded events, as well as by public sector employees during working hours or in official capacity. It also forbids unequal access to state or municipal spaces for contestants, the use of state-owned means during campaign, and holding meetings with public sector employees. Provisions restricting campaigns do not apply to state trustees (regional governors) and mayors. In the [2018 Second Addendum to the Second Compliance Report on Georgia, GRECO](#) stated that it “considers the deletion of the provision allowing for the unlimited campaigning by high-level public officials long overdue”.

⁵⁶ The ODIHR EOM LTOs observed the mayors and deputy mayors of Dmanisi, Kharagauli, Keda, Kvareli, Ozurgeti, Rustavi, Shuakhevi, Tbilisi, Zestaponi, and Zugdidi, engaging in the campaign. The mayor of Ambrolauri stated that he took a leave of absence for the campaign period. Paragraph 5.4 of the 1990 OSCE [Copenhagen Document](#) calls for “a clear separation between the State and political parties”. Paragraph II. B. 1.1 of the [2016 ODIHR and Venice Commission Joint Guidelines](#) stipulates that “the legal framework should provide effective mechanisms for prohibiting public authorities from taking unfair advantages of their positions by holding official public events”.

groups.⁵⁷ While these actions were not in violation of the law, they raised concerns about the government's genuine commitment to preventing undue influence on voters through state resources. In September, the parliament also enacted a law giving amnesty to a wide range of convicted individuals.⁵⁸

Contestants, public officials, and state institutions should refrain from misusing administrative resources for electoral purposes to ensure an equal playing field for electoral participants. In line with previous ODIHR and GRECO recommendations, consideration should be given to the adoption of further legislative and administrative measures to regulate the campaigning activities of high-level public officials, including mayors, and to prevent the circumvention of existing regulations.

Contestants were generally able to campaign freely, and 18 candidate lists competed in a subdued campaign.⁵⁹ However, persistent reports of intimidation, inducement, and pressure on voters, especially on public sector employees and economically vulnerable groups, raised concerns about the ability of some voters to freely form their opinions and cast their vote without fear, at odds with OSCE commitments and international standards.⁶⁰ Some contestants employed highly divisive rhetoric and imagery.⁶¹ Additionally, isolated incidents of violence, cases of event disruptions, verbal abuse, and the destruction of campaign materials reported by both ruling and opposition parties, negatively impacted the campaign atmosphere.⁶² Opposition parties often refrained from reporting election-related incidents

⁵⁷ In February 2024, the Minister of Education [announced](#) a student internships programme for up to 3,000 students, starting in September 2024. The same month, the government [reduced](#) interest rates for over 150,000 pensioners who had taken loans before 2023. In April, the parliament [increased](#) pensions for law enforcement officers, and the government [waived](#) tax liabilities for 145,000 tax payers incurred before 2021. In June 2024, the prime minister [announced](#) the exemption of 1,855 individuals from COVID-19 penalty charges, totalling 5.6 million GEL.

⁵⁸ According to [official estimations](#), following its adoption, over 1,000 prisoners were supposed to be released from penitentiary institutions; the law also impacted approximately 22,000 probationers, with 7,000 released from probation immediately. The law provided complete or partial reduction of punishment for those serving prison terms, probation and on parole on broad range of offences.

⁵⁹ Among the 18 registered candidate lists, GD and the four major opposition lists campaigned most actively.

⁶⁰ On 21 October, GD's honorary chairman threatened members of "For Georgia" with "strict punishment" for their political stances. Intimidation of voters was reported by opposition parties in at least 10 out of 64 observed municipalities. ODIHR EOM interlocutors in 16 municipalities alleged pressure on public employees and those dependent on social assistance to support the ruling party. On 18 October, the ombudsperson [acknowledged](#) information about voter intimidation, including confiscations of ID documents, and called for prompt investigation; similar cases were reported by ODIHR EOM LTOs. Citizen observers reported instances of vote buying both before and on election day, as well as an increase in public sector job creation in the lead-up to the elections. Paragraph 7.7 of the 1990 [OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) requires campaigning to "be conducted in a fair and free atmosphere in which neither administrative action, violence nor intimidation bars the parties and the candidates from freely presenting their views and qualifications, or prevents the voters from learning and discussing them or from casting their vote free of fear of retribution". Paragraph 19 of the 1996 [UNCHR General Comment 25](#) to the ICCPR stipulates that "voters should be able to form opinions independently, free of violence or threat of violence, compulsion, inducement or manipulative interference".

⁶¹ GD billboards displayed unflattering images of opposition leaders depicted on a leash, and juxtaposed contrasting visuals of a peaceful Georgia and war-torn areas in Ukraine, implying that electing any party other than GD could lead to war in the country. The party also produced TV advertisements featuring slogans such as "No to War! No to Agents!" – which used edited statements from opposition politicians to suggest their support for war; "No to LGBT Propaganda!" – insinuating promiscuity within the LGBT community; and "No to Fake News Propaganda!" – alleging that opposition-aligned journalists were spreading disinformation.

⁶² On 16 September, the leader of *Ahali* was pelted with stones while campaigning in Pankisi (Akhmeta municipality). On 19 September, UNM activists were attacked while campaigning in Zugdidi, with UNM alleging GD affiliation, which GD denies. On 6 October, an UNM campaign event in Gurjaani was attacked, allegedly by GD affiliates, resulting in one member being hospitalized. On 12 October, a GD activist allegedly attempted to run over a "For Georgia" party member; the case was reported to the police. On 22 October, the car of a UNM activist in Zugdidi was attacked with stones. On 23 October, a "For Georgia" member was attacked by a group of people in Tbilisi. On 4 September in Tskaltubo, a GD member died following a verbal assault by a UNM supporter. Party leaders and activists from either *Ahali*, "For Georgia" or "Strong Georgia – *Lelo*" were assaulted during canvassing in Dedoplistskaro, Gurjaani, Kareli, and Tbilisi. UNM offices in Batumi, Keda, Tbilisi, and Zestaponi were vandalized, defaced, or robbed. In Chkhorotsku, a "For Georgia" member allegedly damaged a GD activist's car.

to the police, citing a perceived lack of willingness by authorities to investigate.

Authorities should proactively prevent voter intimidation, pressure on public employees, vote buying, electoral violence and educate voters about their rights. If such incidents occur, they should be promptly addressed to provide effective remedies and hold those responsible accountable.

Contestants engaged in traditional campaign methods and online campaigning, with activities remaining relatively low-key throughout the campaign period.⁶³ Most political parties included socio-economic issues in their platforms, but campaign messages were dominated by geopolitics.⁶⁴ The ruling party openly expressed its intention to file a lawsuit with the Constitutional Court to deregister the UNM, labelling its political stance as destructive and making public statements of banning key opposition parties, contrary to the principle of democratic pluralism enshrined in OSCE commitments.⁶⁵ The president also took an active role in the campaign by publicly consulting the opposition on pre-electoral coalitions and government composition, potentially acting outside of her mandate as a neutral arbitrator between state institutions.⁶⁶ Additionally, the ruling party criticized various CSOs for what it assessed as active campaigning in support of the opposition.⁶⁷

Party programmes lacked messaging specifically targeting women. Women candidates from “Strong Georgia – *Lelo*” publicly addressed topics such as gender equality, gender quotas, and the pay gap, whereas GD emphasized traditional family values. Women enjoyed limited visibility as candidates, being featured as speakers at 20 of the 50 campaign events observed by ODIHR EOM and made up 42 per cent of attendees at observed rallies. In the broadcast media, the share of women political actors in prime-time news was between 8 per cent (on *Imedi*) and 28 per cent (on *TV Pirveli*).

Authorities should take measures to promote gender equality in public and political life and ensure equal opportunities for women in the campaign, setting specific, measurable, and clearly defined goals and targets. Consideration should be given to the introduction of additional special measures to encourage political parties to support female candidates.

Around 80 per cent of the population has internet access, with nearly all using social networks, particularly *Facebook*, which ranks as the second most important source of information after

⁶³ ODIHR EOM LTOs observed 50 campaign events in 20 municipalities, organized by 6 electoral contestants. Some 88 per cent of the campaign events were assessed as accessible for persons with disabilities. In the week preceding the elections, some parties held final rallies, gathering tens of thousands of people. On 20 October, CSOs and opposition parties organized a joint rally, expressing their support for EU integration, during which the president addressed the participants. GD’s final rally, on 23 October, enjoyed sizable attendance from the regions; the ODIHR EOM received a number of reports about public sector employees instructed or coerced to attend the rally.

⁶⁴ The ruling party framed the elections as a choice between peace, represented by GD, and war, represented by its opponents. Most opposition parties presented the elections as a referendum on Georgia’s geopolitical stance, expressing fears that government policies may hinder accession to the EU, a constitutional goal, and have subscribed to the “[Georgian Charter](#)”, proclaimed by the president in May 2024 with the declared aim of immediately repealing “laws that contradict the European way”.

⁶⁵ Paragraph 7.6 of the 1990 [Copenhagen Document](#) commits the participating States to “respect the right of individuals and groups to establish, in full freedom, their own political parties [...] and provide [...] guarantees to enable them to compete with each other on a basis of equal treatment before the law and by the authorities”.

⁶⁶ Article 49 of the Constitution states that the president is “the guarantor of the country’s unity and national independence”. According to Article 56, the formation of the government is beyond the president’s mandate, as the prime minister candidate is proposed to parliament by the party that won the most seats in the elections. A 2023 [Constitutional Court](#) decision described the president as “a politically neutral figure who does not hold political power [and] plays the symbolic role of arbitrator between the branches of government”. The president informed the ODIHR EOM that she had acted in line with Article 78, which mandates state bodies to take measures “to ensure the full integration of Georgia into the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization”.

⁶⁷ Individual members of various CSOs publicly expressed their support for different opposition parties, including through donations. GD asserted that the narrative of some CSOs echoed that of the opposition.

television.⁶⁸ Apart from general legislative provisions on freedom of speech, campaigning on social networks is not specifically regulated. In the run-up to elections, state institutions and watchdog organizations raised concerns about the potential impact of disinformation on the electoral process.⁶⁹ During the campaign, fact-checking organizations reported instances of coordinated disinformation. These included anonymous social network accounts spreading fake news or manipulated content, at times sexist or homophobic, aimed at discrediting leading opposition candidates, as well as false claims that voting technologies could reveal voters' choice.⁷⁰ There were no observed efforts by the authorities to address these instances.

All contestants actively campaigned on social networks, with “Strong Georgia – *Lelo*”, “Coalition for Change” and GD posting most frequently.⁷¹ GD-affiliated posts received the highest engagement. Campaign topics focused on the EU integration, the economy, and local issues. The three opposition coalitions coordinated their messaging across party and leader accounts, often criticizing the government. The tone on official accounts remained largely neutral, with limited instances of derogatory and defamatory content.⁷² GD's social network content was less divisive than the party's other campaign communications. Major contestants also utilized paid online advertisements.⁷³

X. CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Campaign finance is regulated by the LPU and the Election Code, supplemented by ACB regulations. While the 2023 legal amendments reduced the annual expenditure cap for political parties and prohibited donations from legal entities, some prior ODIHR and Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption's (GRECO) recommendations remain unaddressed, including explicit regulations on third-party campaigning, and legal provisions related to the publication of conclusions from interim campaign finance report prior to election day.⁷⁴

A. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Election campaigns can be financed from public or private funding. Political parties that surpass a one

⁶⁸ According to the [2023 IRI Georgian Survey of Public Opinion](#), 53 per cent of respondents indicated social networks as a source of information, with 91 per cent of those indicating Facebook as the key social media platform.

⁶⁹ In September, the fact-checking and debunking platform Myth Detector [reported](#) the emergence of newly-created Facebook pages targeting political parties. In August, Meta [announced](#) the removal of a coordinated inauthentic behaviour network originating from the Russian Federation that targeted Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. On 15 October, the State Security Service issued a [statement](#) indicating that “groups linked to domestic political actors” were planning to release AI-manipulated content online ahead of the elections to “spark unrest”.

⁷⁰ See reports from the project FactCheck by GRASS on [fake news](#), [disinformation](#) and [manipulative content](#) disseminated during the electoral period, as well as reports from Myth Detector's [fact-checking](#). Both organizations signed the International Fact-Checking Network [Code of Principles](#) and are partners to the Meta's [fact-checking programme](#). On 9 November, ISFED [reported](#) 7 fake and 15 suspicious Facebook profiles that downplayed reports on electoral violations and reinforced CEC's narrative. The CEC [denied](#) any connection to those profiles and characterized the report as a deliberate attempt to undermine the reputation of the election administration.

⁷¹ Between 20 September and 26 October, the ODIHR EOM conducted a qualitative quantitative monitoring of the activities of over 60 electoral contestants and stakeholders on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

⁷² GD circulated a video containing edited statements from opposition politicians implying their [support](#) for war.

⁷³ By law, online advertisement is subject to disclosure in campaign finance reports. According to data from interim reports, political parties spent 2.7 million GEL on online advertising, of which GD spent 820,000 GEL, “Strong Georgia – *Lelo*” 788,000 GEL and *Ahali* 733,000 GEL. According to [Meta Ad Library](#), the official Facebook accounts of *Ahali* and GD spent the most on paid advertisement in last 30 days preceding elections (70,000 EUR and 60,200 EUR, respectively). This was followed by the official Facebook account of “Strong Georgia – *Lelo*”, which spent 45,900 EUR, UNM 32,200 EUR and *Girchi* – NPC 31,000 EUR.

⁷⁴ Moreover, the [ACB regulation on transparency of political finances from 23 August 2023](#) does not reflect the latest legal amendments on prohibition of electoral blocs and donations from legal entities.

per cent threshold in the most recent parliamentary elections receive annual public funding, proportional to the number of votes they obtained.⁷⁵ Campaigns may also be financed from monetary or in-kind donations from natural persons. Citizens can donate up to 60,000 GEL per year.⁷⁶ Donations from legal, foreign, anonymous, publicly funded and religious entities, as well as cash donations, are prohibited.

The ruling party held a substantial financial advantage over its competitors. Since the 2020 parliamentary elections, it has received 41 per cent of the annual budget allocation for political parties. In 2024, it also received the highest amount of donations, significantly surpassing those of other contestants.⁷⁷ Several opposition parties reported limited campaign budgets, further constrained by a lack of donations, which they attributed to the economic hardships faced by the electorate and concerns about potential scrutiny from authorities. The ACB subjected approximately 75 per cent of all political donations to investigation to verifying the financial capacities of the donors.⁷⁸

The 2022 and 2023 legal amendments reduced the annual expenditure cap of political parties from 0.1 per cent of the national GDP to 0.04 per cent, amounting to 32 million GEL for this year. According to campaign finance reports, all contestants' expenditures remained well below this limit. GD and *Ahali* declared the highest campaign spending, 23.4 million and 10 million GEL, respectively.

B. DISCLOSURE AND OVERSIGHT

Since 2023, party and campaign finance oversight has shifted from the State Audit Office to the newly established ACB. The ACB enjoys budgetary independence and substantially increased human resources compared to the previous oversight institution. However, the institution is not a collegial body; by law, it is represented solely by its head, who is vested with the authority to make decisions on its behalf, and is appointed by the prime minister for a six-year term, under a procedure that does not fully ensure the institution's independence or safeguards it from potential political influence.⁷⁹

To fully guarantee the independence of the Anti-Corruption Bureau and its decisions from political influence, the mechanism for the appointment procedure for the head of the institution should be revised as well as the decision-making process of the Bureau.

Political parties are required to submit annual financial reports and respond to *ex officio* information

⁷⁵ After the 2020 elections, the total annual allocation of 12.5 million GEL was distributed among 14 parties. Following the 2021 amendments to the LPU, which deny state funding to any political party that fails to take up at least half of the parliamentary mandates it won, and suspend funding for six months if half of its members do not attend parliamentary sessions without valid reasons, two parties lost their right to receive state funding.

⁷⁶ 1 EUR equals approximately 3 GEL.

⁷⁷ GD received 5.2 million GEL per year, followed by the UNM with 2.2 million GEL and the EG with 1.1 million GEL. According to [ACB data](#) of 25 October, in 2024, GD fundraised 14.5 million GEL, followed by *Ahali* (9.5 million GEL), and “Strong Georgia – *Lelo*” (6.6 million GEL).

⁷⁸ According to the [ACB report](#), 1,190 donations given in 2024 to 16 political parties were being verified. In case of the EG, “Generations for Georgia”, GD, the Christian-Conservative Party of Georgia, and People's Party, the ACB decided to verify all received donations.

⁷⁹ The head of the ACB is selected for a six year-term by the prime minister from among candidates identified by a commission comprised of different state agencies and a CSO representative. Venice Commission, in its [2023 Opinion on the Provisions of the Law on the Fight Against Corruption Concerning the Anti-Corruption Bureau](#), recognised the competition element in the selection process, but found the composition of the commission, dominated by members representing the political majority, “not sufficiently pluralistic”. Article 14 of the Council of Europe Recommendation [Rec\(2003\)4](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member states on common rules against corruption in the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns, stipulates that “[s]tates should provide for independent monitoring in respect of the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns”. Paragraph 277 of the 2020 ODIHR and Venice Commission [Joint Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#) recommends that “[t]he respective appointment procedure needs to be carefully drafted to avoid political influence over members”.

requests from the ACB.⁸⁰ While the ACB lacks investigative powers, it can address violations reported to it or identified through its own monitoring.⁸¹ It has the authority to draw up a protocol of administration violation triggering sanctions, which are subject to court approval.⁸² The law provides the ACB with a three-month deadline for administrative proceedings related to monitoring party finance and campaign expenses, with a possibility of extension for the same period, and general administrative proceedings apply.⁸³ This limits the effectiveness of this remedy. The ACB has not issued any sanctions for campaign finance violations before election day, citing the complexity of financial scrutiny required. This potentially left issues such as circumvention of donation limits and under-reporting of campaign expenditures unresolved before the elections.⁸⁴ Several opposition parties informed ODIHR EOM of the finances of their leaders being investigated by the ACB, finding the implementation of the oversight discretionary.⁸⁵

To contribute to transparency and ensure equitable scrutiny of all political parties, the Anti-Corruption Bureau should develop clear regulations outlining the procedures for and methodology of political finance oversight.

Contestants must submit campaign finance reports to the ACB every three weeks once elections are called, with final reports due within one month of the publication of the final results.⁸⁶ All contestants timely submitted their interim finance reports, which the ACB promptly published online.⁸⁷ However, reports varied in detail provided and were only made available as scanned documents, which hindered external data analysis.⁸⁸ While not legally required, the ACB published conclusions on interim campaign finance reports one day before the elections, although these offered very limited analysis of contestants' actual campaign finances.⁸⁹ Overall, the system of disclosure and limited actual oversight did not contribute to the effectiveness of campaign finance.

⁸⁰ The ACB can also receive notifications from legal entities and private persons. It informed the ODIHR EOM that some CSOs have not responded to its reported openness to cooperate.

⁸¹ The ACB informed the ODIHR EOM that it verifies the accuracy of party reports by comparing them with data from its six field monitors and media monitoring. The ACB also has the authority to interview individuals or summon them before a magistrate to obtain information.

⁸² The law provides for expedited procedures during a pre-election period for examination of administrative offence protocols submitted by the ACB and appealing the court ruling.

⁸³ The law provides for a six-year limitation period for the imposition of liability for the offences related to the party and campaign finance and accountability. Prior to these elections, the ACB received only one complaint concerning political party finances, which remained under review by election day. It also received notifications from ComCom regarding alleged donations of free airtime by broadcasters, also under consideration at that time.

⁸⁴ During the campaign period, the ACB sanctioned five individual candidates for failure to provide their property declarations, required by law.

⁸⁵ Leading politicians of the Coalition for Change, “Strong Georgia – Lelo” and the UNM informed the ODIHR EOM that their finances were being investigated by the ACB. According to Section 11.4 of the [2013 ODIHR Guidelines for Reviewing a Legal Framework for Elections](#) “[t]he parameters of the audit must be clearly defined and applied uniformly to all reports, in order to prevent biased auditing in favor of or against a particular candidate or party”.

⁸⁶ Parties that are eligible for state funding must also submit a report on funds used from the call of the elections until election day within 12 days after the election.

⁸⁷ The first interim report was submitted by all 27 political parties registered as electoral contestants, while the second and third were submitted by all 18 political parties that registered their candidates lists, although the “Us” party submitted the third interim report after the deadline. The interim campaign report [template](#) includes 19 forms requiring disclosure of donations, membership fees, loans, staff remuneration, business trips and advertising expenses, non-financial assets, and registers of real estate, vehicles, leased and rented properties.

⁸⁸ Paragraph 258 of the [Joint Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#) states that “[d]igitalizing information and submitting it to the regulatory body in its digitalized, easily searchable and reusable form can facilitate oversight and therefore minimize the need for paper-based procedures”.

⁸⁹ According to the ACB [report](#), the agency initiated 35 administrative proceedings related to political parties and campaign finance in 2024. It also requested clarifications on interim campaign finance reports from *Ahali*, GD, SA, “Strong Georgia – Lelo”, and UNM. Additionally, the report included information about the number of scrutinized donations and decisions related to “subjects with a declared electoral goal”.

Consideration could be given to developing a system of financial disclosure that ensures uniformity in the reporting formats utilized by political parties and presents such data in an accessible and user-friendly format, thereby strengthening mechanisms for public oversight.

The ACB interpreted the existing provisions on third-party campaigning in a manner that could potentially infringe upon the right to freedom of expression while it did not apply this approach consistently to all campaigns conducted by non-contestants.⁹⁰ During the campaign, the ACB designated several entities and individuals as ‘subjects with a declared electoral goal’, finding that these had conducted campaigns in line with opposition messages.⁹¹ Such designation would subject the affected organizations to the same financial regulations as political parties, including a ban on receiving international funding for certain activities.⁹² Subsequently, Transparency International Georgia (TI Georgia) which was designated in such a way, suspended its election observation activities. On 1 October, the prime minister affirmed the lawfulness of these decisions but urged the ACB to reconsider them and refrain from making such designations in the campaign period. On 2 October, the ACB revoked all related decisions, citing “national interests”.⁹³ It also did not react to third-party campaigning in favour of GD after the prime minister’s appeal.⁹⁴ Overall, the ACB and the court exercised broad discretionary powers in reacting to suspected third-party campaigns, indicating political influence.

To enhance transparency, legal provisions on third-party campaigning should be strengthened and clarified, with their application grounded in clear, objective, and foreseeable criteria to ensure consistency and avoid arbitrary enforcement that may infringe upon freedom of expression.

The establishment of a specialized oversight body for party and campaign finance was in line with previous ODIHR and GRECO recommendations. However, the ACB’s selective and inconsistent application of legal provisions raised concerns about political instrumentalization. Moreover, the transparency and effectiveness of campaign finance oversight were further constrained by legislative gaps, limited transparency of disclosed data, and procedural ambiguities and inconsistencies in the ACB’s auditing processes.

⁹⁰ Paragraph 256 of 2020 ODIHR and Venice Commission [Joint Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#) provides that “[t]hird parties should be free to fundraise and express views on political issues as a means of free expression, and their activity should not be unconditionally prohibited. However, it is important that some forms of regulation, with comparable obligations and restrictions as apply to parties and party candidates, be extended to third parties that are involved in the campaign, to ensure transparency and accountability”.

⁹¹ The law provides for entities not registered as contestants to campaign if they publicly declare an intention to gain power, and bounds these ‘subjects with a declared electoral goal’ by campaign finance regulations. On 27 August, the ACB [designated](#) as ‘subjects with a declared electoral goal’ the “Freedom Square” movement and the Eastern European Centre for Multiparty Democracy, their director and 24 members. On 24 September, Transparency International Georgia (TI Georgia) and its executive director, as well as the “Vote for Europe” movement, its director, and board members, received the same designation. While the law defines “subjects with a declared electoral goal” as those who openly declare their desire to come to power, the Tbilisi Court of Appeal broadly interpreted this provision to extend to any campaign activities, including against a contestant.

⁹² The ACB informed the ODIHR EOM that TI could have continued to receive grants or other forms of financial assistance from international donors for their daily activities as a non-governmental and monitoring organization.

⁹³ GD representatives informed the ODIHR EOM that the given status could preclude these organizations from taking part in election observation, and the ACB wanted to avoid the discreditation of the electoral process.

⁹⁴ The civil society organization “United Neutral Georgia” actively campaigned against the main opposition parties, using online videos and public statements to discourage support for them.

XI. MEDIA

A. MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

The media landscape is diverse but highly polarized, reinforcing broader political power structures.⁹⁵ Media outlets operate in a financially challenging environment with an insufficient advertising market, and are largely dependent on political and business interests, contrary to international standards.⁹⁶ The Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB) and Adjara TV and Radio, funded from the state budget, have limited audience, while commercial TV remains the main source of political information. Smaller, primarily internet-based outlets, generally considered to provide more independent coverage, are reliant on international grants, and therefore, potentially have their work impacted by the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence.

The safety of journalists remains a major concern with several recent assaults, acts of intimidation and instances of pressure, including on election day.⁹⁷ Despite legal safeguards for civil defamation procedures, many recent defamation claims by public officials have been decided against opposition-affiliated media and journalists, undermining investigative journalism and further challenging a financially fragile media environment.⁹⁸ Most ODIHR EOM interlocutors also reported significant barriers in accessing public information, with respective court decisions pending for years.⁹⁹

The authorities should fulfil their duty to protect the safety of media staff through effective and timely protective measures. State authorities should promptly investigate and bring to justice those involved in attacks on, and ill-treatment of journalists and other media actors.

B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Legal provisions mandate impartiality, fairness, and pluralism in broadcasting; however, these rely on self-regulation. In contrast, provisions on free and paid advertising, as well as debates, fall under the direct oversight of the Georgian National Communications (ComCom). The law mandates most broadcasters, including the commercial ones, to provide a significant amount of free airtime to contestants.¹⁰⁰ Contrary to a previous ODIHR recommendation, free airtime and participation in debates

⁹⁵ The most watched TV stations include *Imedi*, *Rustavi 2* and *PosTV*, perceived as affiliated with GD, and *Mtavari Channel*, *TV Pirveli* and *Formula*, perceived as affiliated with the opposition.

⁹⁶ [General Comment 25 to the ICCPR](#), in paragraph 25, states that for the exercise of rights under Article 25 of the Covenant, “a free press and other media able to comment on public issues without censorship or restraint and to inform public opinion” is essential. See also the [2018 Joint declaration](#) by UN, OSCE, OAS and ACHPR, which stipulates that politicians and public officials should refrain from taking actions which undermine the independence of the media, such as interfering politically in the operations of or taking commercial control over regulatory bodies or commercial, community or public service media.

⁹⁷ According to the CoE Safety of Journalists Platform [alert](#) of 30 October, at least 15 incidents involving 22 journalists and media workers facing verbal and physical assaults, insults, intimidation, and obstruction were documented on election day. On 13 November, the Special Investigation Service informed about an investigation into 50 incidents of potential illegal obstruction of journalists’ professional activities related to the elections.

⁹⁸ According to the CSO [Georgian Democracy Initiative](#), before the elections, there were 36 pending defamation cases, mostly filed by public officials, primarily against *Formula*, *Mtavari Channel* and *Pirveli TV*. Since the beginning of the year, *Pirveli TV* alone has been ordered by courts to pay a total amount of 45,565 GEL in damages.

⁹⁹ On 22 November 2023, a [decree](#) issued by the speaker of the parliament restricted the access of accredited journalists to the parliament. On 28 September 2024, the public defender [called](#) on the authorities to bring legislation on the access to public information in line with international standards and to enforce its implementation.

¹⁰⁰ Starting 50 days prior to the elections, public and community broadcasters were required to provide a total of five minutes of free airtime per hour, distributed among qualified contestants, while commercial TV stations with nationwide coverage had to offer a total of 7.5 minutes every three hours. Additionally, GPB, in accordance with the law, provided a total of 5 minutes of free airtime per hour, distributed among 12 ‘non-qualified’ contestants, along with up to 20 minutes of daily live coverage of campaign events per contestant.

were only granted to qualified electoral subjects.¹⁰¹ “For Georgia” sought to obtain free airtime on additional legal grounds, but was rejected by ComCom and the courts.¹⁰² Further, based on restrictive provisions on campaigning that “serves the campaign goals of another election subject” and their narrow interpretation, ComCom and the courts sanctioned six broadcasters and limited opposition parties’ ability to campaign in the media (also see *Election Dispute Resolution*).¹⁰³

The existing system for allocation of free airtime and participation in debates should be reviewed to provide equal campaign opportunities for all contestants. Effective remedies for related violations should be applied promptly during the campaign. Consideration could be given to amending the law to prioritize compensation for lost airtime over financially sanctioning media outlets.

ComCom, a collegial body with five members, is vested with licensing and oversight of broadcast media. It is responsible for adjudicating media-related complaints, which are subject to mandatory judicial review, if violations of the Election Code are found.¹⁰⁴ During the campaign period, its meetings were broadcast online, and administrative protocols and decisions were published on its website, though sometimes with delays. Despite 2023 amendments to the Law on Broadcasting, which introduced a competition commission to shortlist members following an open call, the law does not provide for transparency of the commission’s selection. Furthermore, the government retains influence over the appointment procedure for ComCom members, which does not ensure its independence.¹⁰⁵ ComCom also has excessive sanctioning power, as in cases of a repeated violation of the Law on Broadcasting, after imposing a fine, it may suspend broadcasters’ licenses.¹⁰⁶ While not applied in the electoral period, the 2023 amendments extended ComCom’s authority by introducing enforcement measures on ‘hate speech’, ‘incitement to terrorism’, and ‘obscenity’, with the stated aim of aligning the law with the EU Audio-Visual Media Services Directive (AVSMD).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ By law, political parties and electoral blocs that are in the parliament qualify for free airtime, if they are entitled to public funding. The [2021 Joint Opinion](#) of ODIHR and Venice Commission stipulates that, “where the State allocates media space, the regulation concerned should provide that free airtime and print space be allocated to all parties on a reasonable basis, consistent with the principle of equal treatment before the law”.

¹⁰² A broadcaster may recognize a political party as qualified if it receives at least four per cent support in four “verified” public opinion polls. The law sets overly complex and unclear requirements for a public opinion poll to be recognized as verified. After *Formula* was fined 5,000 GEL by court for granting “For Georgia” free airtime without sufficiently verifying the polls, other stations refrained from granting the party free airtime on this ground. The ComCom informed the ODIHR EOM that the broadcaster allocated free airtime to “For Georgia” but failed to disclose the legal grounds for this decision, resulting in a violation of the legislation.

¹⁰³ *GPB, Adjara TV and Radio, Mtavari Channel, TV Pirveli, Formula and Silk Media* were issued warnings, while *Citizens, EG and SA* were fined 10,000 GEL respectively by the CEC and court for broadcasting free airtime after these political parties announced to join another political party, before the formal candidate registration. The content of these ads was considered to “serve the campaign goals of another election subject”. The ComCom informed ODIHR that it applied the law uniformly across all broadcasters.

¹⁰⁴ On 27 August, ComCom started quantitative monitoring of 55 TV stations, as well as quantitative and qualitative monitoring of 7 TV stations, but did not publish any conclusions prior to election day.

¹⁰⁵ The government retains the power to intervene through “considering the qualification requirements and selection principles” before sending the shortlist to the president. Members are voted by a simple majority in parliament. The [2003 Joint declaration](#) by UN, OSCE and OAS representatives states that “all public authorities which exercise formal regulatory powers over the media should be protected against interference [...] including by an appointments process for members which is transparent, allows for public input and is not controlled by any particular political party”.

¹⁰⁶ See paragraph 34 of the [General Comment 34](#) to the ICCPR which stipulates that restrictions to freedom of expression “must be the least intrusive instrument amongst those which might achieve their protective function; they must be proportionate to the interest to be protected”.

¹⁰⁷ While the AVSMD bans “incitement to violence or hatred” and “public provocation to commit a terrorist offence”, it does not address the concept of “obscenity”. The Law on Broadcasting ambiguously defines obscenity as “an action that contradicts the ethical norms established in society and does not have socio-political, cultural, educational, or scientific value”.

To strengthen its independence, the appointment procedure for members of the Georgian National Communications Commission should be revised.

By law, broadcasters are liable for the content of political advertising.¹⁰⁸ Following complaints by GD, three TV stations were repeatedly fined for refusing to air particular GD campaign ads which, in their reasoning, violated the law, including provisions on “hate speech”.¹⁰⁹ Prior requests by some TV stations to ComCom for clarification were rejected on procedural grounds. Subsequently, the two government-aligned TV stations monitored by the ODIHR EOM stopped airing any campaign advertisements by opposition parties on 11 October.¹¹⁰ Complaints filed by “Strong Georgia – *Lelo*” and “Unity – to Save Georgia” were upheld in court and several government-aligned broadcasters were fined.¹¹¹ However, as the law did not provide for expedited procedures, the violations were not remedied, undermining equal opportunities for all contestants to campaign.¹¹²

The media should be exempted from liability for disseminating unlawful statements made directly by parties or candidates, whether in the context of live broadcasting or advertising, unless the statements have been ruled unlawful by a court or the statements constitute direct incitement to violence.

C. MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CAMPAIGN

Between 18 September and 25 October, the ODIHR EOM conducted quantitative and qualitative monitoring of six TV stations and two online media outlets.¹¹³ The monitoring showed bias across all monitored TV stations, with legal obligations for impartial news coverage unimplemented on commercial television. In its coverage of all contestants, the public broadcaster GPB was mostly positive or neutral in tone (89 per cent), but the majority of its campaign coverage was allocated to GD (61 per cent). As representatives of most opposition parties declined participation in the only debate aired on GPB, , no debate occurred between the ruling parties and major opposition.

Most TV stations dedicated the majority of campaign coverage in news to GD. The tone on commercial TV reflected the publicly perceived party alignments of broadcasters. *GPB*, *Formula*, *Imedi*, *Mtavari Channel*, *Rustavi 2* and *TV Pirveli* devoted 61, 56, 82, 52, 80 and 51 per cent of their campaign news coverage to GD, respectively. On *Formula*, 89 per cent of GD’s campaign was presented in a negative tone, while 88 per cent of the campaign coverage of the “Coalition for Change” was positive. On *Imedi*, 89 per cent of the campaign coverage of “For Georgia” was in negative tone, while 80 of GD’s campaign coverage was positive. On *Mtavari Channel*, 90 per cent of GD’s coverage was in negative tone, while 82 per cent of coverage of “Coalition for Change” was positive. On *Rustavi 2*, 66 per cent of the coverage of “Unity – to Save Georgia” was in a negative tone, while 68 per cent of GD’s coverage was positive. On *TV Pirveli*, 91 per cent of GD’s campaign coverage was negative, while 50, 54 and 56 of the coverage of “Coalition for Change”, “Strong Georgia” and “Unity – to Save Georgia” was positive.

¹⁰⁸ A 2021 [Supreme Court Decision](#) and the 2024 ComCom [Guidelines](#) require broadcasters to ensure that content is in line with the Constitution and the law, including vague provisions on “incitement to aggression and chaos” and “dangerous actions”. A [2009 Joint declaration](#) by UN, OSCE, OAS and ACHPR stipulates that media should “be exempted from liability for disseminating unlawful statements made directly by parties or candidates”.

¹⁰⁹ *Mtavari Channel*, *Pirveli TV* and *Formula* were fined 15,000 GEL each for refusing ads portraying CSOs in the context of “moral degradation”, and the choice between war and peace with pictures of war-torn Ukraine.

¹¹⁰ On 10 October, [Imedi](#) and [PosTV](#) announced that they would not air any ads by the “collective UNM” to “eliminate the disbalance”.

¹¹¹ Following complaints by “Strong Georgia”, *Imedi* and *Rustavi 2* were fined for ceasing to air their paid ads, while the party was not qualified for free airtime. “Strong Georgia’s” request for immediate enforcement was not granted. Upon UNM complaints, *Imedi*, *Rustavi 2*, *Maestro* and *Pos TV* were fined for not airing their advertising.

¹¹² See Paragraph 7.8 of the [1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document](#), which provides for “unimpeded access to the media on a non-discriminatory basis for all political groupings and individuals wishing to participate in the electoral process”. See also section I.2.3 of the Code of Good Practice which requires equality of opportunity.

¹¹³ *GPB*, *Formula*, *Imedi*, *Mtavari Channel*, *TV Pirveli* and *Rustavi 2*, as well as [netgazeti.ge](#) and [tabula.ge](#).

Overall, commercial media outlets monitored by the ODIHR EOM were instrumentalized for political propaganda, undermining independent news production and amplifying divisive political rhetoric. The lack of impartial analysis of party programmes and the refusal of senior political actors and prominent parties to debate, challenged voters' ability to make an informed choice.

XII. PARTICIPATION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

Georgia has ratified the key international conventions on protecting minority rights. While the Constitution grants full political rights and prohibits discrimination on national, ethnic, religious, or linguistic grounds, there are limited legal provisions specifically addressing the rights of ethnic minorities.¹¹⁴ The formation of political parties that promote ethnic discord or have a regional character is prohibited.

National minorities remain underrepresented in public and political life.¹¹⁵ Minorities constitute 13 per cent of the population, with Azerbaijanis (6.3 per cent) and Armenians (4.5 per cent) being the largest groups. However, in these elections, only some 5 per cent of the candidates were from minority communities, and few held advantageous positions on candidate lists.¹¹⁶ Campaign events featured minimal outreach or messaging specifically directed at these communities, and the representation of minority community members among speakers was low. In some instances, use of minority languages was observed during campaign activities.¹¹⁷ In at least one instance, alleged belonging to an ethnic minority was used as a derogatory accusation.¹¹⁸

The CEC took positive steps by preparing voter education and electoral materials, including ballot papers, in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. However, the law grants the CEC discretion over the provision of materials in minority languages, resulting in inconsistencies in their availability.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ These include regulations of the 2015 Law on the Official Language providing for the right to access to public information in minority languages, as well as for the use of minority languages in public institutions and during official events; those rights are limited to the national minority areas. The Election Code provides for the use of the minority languages in electoral processes in the municipalities compactly inhabited by national minorities. Number of provisions concerning elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality, also applicable to national minorities, are enshrined in the Law on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, the Law on the State Language, the Government Program 2025-2028, the National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights in Georgia for 2022-2030, and other state strategies and action plans.

¹¹⁵ The 2024 [Fourth Opinion on Georgia](#) of the Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities states that “At the government level, persons belonging to national minorities are still very rarely or not at all represented in central government bodies [...] The representation of national minorities in local councils of the municipalities where persons belonging to minorities live in substantial numbers is disproportionately low [...] with the exception of local councils of two municipalities”.

¹¹⁶ National minority representatives constituted 6 per cent of the candidates within the first 10 positions. No list was led by an ethnic-minority candidate, and three lists included no minority representatives. The highest percentages of national minority representatives appeared on the lists of the Party of Georgian Unity and Development (19 per cent), “Our United Georgia” (16 per cent), and *Tribuna* (13 per cent), none of which passed the electoral threshold.

¹¹⁷ Of the campaign events observed by the EOM, Azerbaijani was used at an *Ahali* event in Mtskheta and a UNM one in Kabali. *Ahali*, GD, and “Strong Georgia – *Lelo*” placed posters in Azerbaijani in Sagarejo. “*For Georgia*” distributed campaign materials in Armenian in Akhalkalaki and “Strong Georgia – *Lelo*” in Azerbaijani in Gardabani.

¹¹⁸ On 11 October, PosTV alleged that a “Strong Georgia – *Lelo*” leader was of Armenian descent; the public defender deemed the broadcast discriminatory.

¹¹⁹ By law, voter lists for polling stations in areas with national minority populations must be posted in the respective minority languages on the CEC website. However, the preparation of ballots in minority languages is contingent on the necessity as assessed by the CEC. If ballots are produced in a minority language, logbooks and summary protocols may, but are not required to, be provided in that language. Additionally, no provision mandates voter education and information to be available in minority languages.

Moreover, PEC members in areas with significant national minority populations were primarily trained in Georgian, with the option to receive materials in their native languages. The user interface of the electronic voting technologies was only available in Georgian, which limited the ability of PEC members and voters from minority communities to fully understand and effectively operate the devices.¹²⁰ National minorities constituted only two per cent of the DEC members.¹²¹ Six elected MPs represent national minority communities, none of whom are women.

To ensure equal access to information and ability to participate in the process, clear guidelines on the provision of voter information and materials in minority languages should be established. The user interface of the electronic voting technologies should be available in minority languages in areas mandated to provide voter materials in those languages.

XIII. ELECTION DISPUTE RESOLUTION

In 2022, some deadlines for election dispute resolution were extended, while deadlines for imposing disciplinary liability were shortened, partly addressing previous ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations. Nevertheless, most deadlines for handling election disputes are lengthy and fail to ensure a timely and efficient process to address electoral violations.¹²² Procedures at the Court of Appeal lack an expedited resolution for administrative offences, which left some appeals unresolved before elections.¹²³ The law does not provide broad legal standing to all, contrary to international standards. It only grants broad legal standing to contestants and observer organizations, while voters can only file complaints on their registration or non-inclusion on the voter list.¹²⁴ Decisions made by an election commission can be appealed to a higher commission, and then a district or city court, with the Court of Appeals serving as the final instance.

To guarantee effective remedy, the electoral dispute resolution framework should be reviewed to broaden the legal standing of voters, and adjust legal deadlines, allowing adequate time for the preparation and adjudication of complaints and administrative offences while ensuring duly expedited procedure, in line with international good practice.

Most complaints were handled by CEC or DEC chairpersons rather than the full commissions,

¹²⁰ The 2023 European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) [Report on Georgia](#) states that “according to the 2014 census, 44.5% of the ethnic Armenians and 73.9% of the ethnic Azerbaijani citizens had poor competence in the state language”. Paragraph 1 of the 2017 [Council of Europe \(CoE\) Recommendations on E-voting](#) stipulates that “[t]he voter interface of an e-voting system shall be easy to understand and use by all voters”.

¹²¹ According to the CEC, of the 1,241 DEC members, 24 are of Armenian and 1 was of Azerbaijani ethnicity.

¹²² The law grants two-day deadlines to appeal most DEC and CEC decisions and adjudicate appeals, while parties have only one or two days, respectively, to appeal the ruling, and the Court of Appeal shall decide on the case within two days. The law provides the election administration with ten-day deadlines to respond to applications for drawing up administrative offence protocols and for court decisions on these protocols, compared to the two-day deadline for ComCom and the court to address offences by broadcasters. The dismissal by a commission chair to draw up a protocol can be appealed within two days; in case of misuse of administrative resources, the complainant and the court have one day each to appeal and adjudicate. Guideline II.3.3.g of the [Code of Good Practice](#) suggests “a time limit of three to five days at first instance (both for lodging appeals and making rulings)”.

¹²³ For administrative offences, parties have 10 days to appeal a first-instance court ruling, and the Court of Appeal has up to 30 days to decide. While the Court of Appeal generally ruled within 15 days, this limited “Strong Georgia” and UNM’s opportunity to campaign on *Imedi* and *Rustavi 2*, as broadcasters refused to air opposition ads pending a final court ruling.

¹²⁴ Article 2.3(a) of the [ICCPR](#) states that “any person whose rights or freedoms as herein recognized are violated shall have an effective remedy”. Guideline II.3.3.f of the [Code of Good Practice](#) provides that “all candidates and all voters registered in the constituency concerned must be entitled to appeal”.

weakening their status as a collegial body, and negatively impacting transparency.¹²⁵ Prior to election day, only 25 out of 231 complaints (11 per cent) lodged with the election administration were handled in open sessions.¹²⁶ The CEC maintains an online database of complaints reviewed by election commissions or adjudicated by courts, which was generally comprehensive.¹²⁷ However, courts and administrative bodies did not publish judgments on challenged decisions and administrative offences, citing a lack of human resources to redact personal data, despite the legal obligation for courts to do so.¹²⁸

The majority of the 231 complaints filed with election commissions before election day concerned the appointment and operation of PECs, mobile voter lists, alleged misuse of administrative resources, and campaign violations.¹²⁹ While most were reviewed on merits, they were often dismissed as unsubstantiated without adequate investigation.¹³⁰ The ComCom and the election administration initiated proceedings into some 50 administrative offences, mostly for violations of airtime allocation rules and the misuse of administrative resources; all such motions were upheld by the court.¹³¹ In open sessions, the Tbilisi City Court handled more than 50 election-related disputes, while the Tbilisi Court of Appeals decided on 27 appeals and partially satisfied 2 of them.¹³² The examination and adjudication of cases by the administrative bodies and the court revealed both ambiguities in the legislation and inconsistencies in its application (see also *Media and Campaign Finance*).¹³³ Some decisions and judgments lacked sufficient substantiation, particularly where the legal interpretation was questionable,

¹²⁵ Election commission chairpersons may deny the consideration of any complaint without it being reviewed by the commission; the majority of complaints were dismissed following this procedure. Chairpersons also unilaterally decide on drawing up protocols for administrative offences.

¹²⁶ While the CEC examined 17 out of 40 pre-election complaints in open sessions, 183 out of 191 DEC decisions on complaints were signed by the chairpersons only, indicating unilateral adoption of the decision.

¹²⁷ The CEC did not publish six protocols of administrative offences against three political parties drawn up upon the referral of information by ComCom for violations of the airtime rules, and the court rulings sanctioning the contestants are not publicly available.

¹²⁸ The Law on Common Courts mandates that all court decisions shall be published online and be depersonalised.

¹²⁹ Of these, 15 complaints related to the appointment of PEC members, alleging links with or support to the ruling party, while 83 were filed mostly by the UNM, mostly on the same day, in selected locations, concerning the late opening of PECs and their operations. Some 110 complaints concerned alleged violations of campaign rules, and misuse of administrative resources, among other issues, with 11 satisfied. In total, disciplinary measures were requested in some 70 complaints, with 5 being satisfied. Some 140 complaints were filed by UNM, 5 by “Coalition for Change”, and 1 by GD.

¹³⁰ Many complaints at DEC level regarding the alleged misuse of administrative resources were dismissed solely based on the denial or response of the alleged violator.

¹³¹ The law sets very short, one-day deadlines for adjudication of appeals and appealing the ruling related to alleged misuse of administrative resources during the campaign, differing from the deadlines set for other election-related complaints. However, the courts applied regular election-related deadlines to such appeals.

¹³² The courts dismissed complaints against CEC decisions on matters such as opening polling stations abroad, setting remuneration for election commission members, and adjusting procedural deadlines. Among first-instance cases, only motions from election commission chairs seeking sanctions for administrative offenses and one UNM appeal against a DEC’s refusal to hold a mayor’s staff member accountable for misuse of administrative resources were upheld, resulting in a warning; all other cases were dismissed. In one case involving airtime usage, the fine was reduced, while in another, the Court of Appeal annulled the CEC’s refusal to register a contestant and instructed the CEC to reconsider the matter.

¹³³ The law contains conflicting provisions on eligibility for free airtime, broadcaster obligations to air political ads, the ban on pre-electoral blocs, and restrictions on using airtime to “serve the campaigning goals of another electoral subject”. This, combined with the discrepancy in the time frames for candidate registration and campaign period, led to three opposition parties and six broadcasters being sanctioned by the CEC, ComCom, and courts for airing ads against the ruling party, deemed to benefit a publicly announced coalition that lacked legal status. The election administration did not follow the same reasoning in the alleged misuse of administrative resources by prospective GD candidates, stating that restrictions apply only after candidate registration concludes.

raising concerns over possible bias.¹³⁴

To further increase transparency and confidence in election dispute resolution, all disputes should be handled by election commissions collegially and in open sessions, based on thorough consideration of the substance of complaints. All judicial acts, decisions and protocols should be well substantiated and based on sound interpretation of the law and promptly published online.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) launched investigations into 31 incidents (as of 25 October) concerning election-related violence and property damage; however, no charges were filed. Throughout the electoral period, trust in law-enforcement, the election administration, and the judiciary to effectively and impartially adjudicate politically sensitive matters remained low. This, combined with a prolonged lack of resolution of these matters and limited outreach to affected parties, discouraged some victims from reporting their grievances.¹³⁵ Furthermore, restrictive deadlines, insufficient investigation and adjudication of complaints, inconsistent application of the law, and a lack of transparency collectively undermined the right to an effective remedy, at odds with the OSCE commitments and international standards.¹³⁶

XIV. ELECTION OBSERVATION

The law provides for citizen and international election observation, as well as observation by representatives of contestants.¹³⁷ In an inclusive manner, the CEC accredited 101 citizen observer groups with 23,153 observers, as well as 76 international organizations and diplomatic representations with 1,713 observers. Contributing to transparency, several citizen observer groups conducted long-term observation activities, focusing on the assessment of the legal framework, pre-electoral environment, misuse of administrative resources, and electoral dispute resolution.¹³⁸

While the observation scene was vibrant, many CSOs reported on the stigmatizing impact of the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence before and during the election period. This, coupled with potential sanctions for non-compliance, hindered their ability to operate in an environment free from undue pressure. Some organizations were also targeted by discrediting campaigning from state authorities and

¹³⁴ For example, cases of alleged campaigning online by public officials and election administration members through their personal social media accounts in support of the ruling party were dismissed based on the official's accounts. In similar cases against opposition supporters, sanctions were imposed.

¹³⁵ In some publicly reported instances of damaging party property and campaign materials, MIA did not launch inquiries, citing a lack of official criminal reports. These incidents, together with other cases, were discussed at the Interagency Task Force for Free and Fair Elections (IATF), mandated to prevent and react to election-related violations by public officials. By the election day, the IATF had nine meetings and mostly discussed issues reported in media. Representatives of opposition parties provided limited information on incidents and did not attend the meetings considering them ineffective.

¹³⁶ Paragraph 5.10 of the [1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) states that everyone shall “have an effective means of redress against administrative decisions, so as to guarantee respect for fundamental rights”. See also the 2022 [Concluding observations](#) by the UN Human Rights Committee, which expressed concerns over “reports of the persistent lack of independence and impartiality in the judiciary of the State party”.

¹³⁷ Domestic non-profit organizations registered at least one year before election day, as well as foreign and international organizations with statutes supporting election observation and/or human rights protection, may apply for observer accreditation.

¹³⁸ Among other organizations, the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) assessed the electoral legal framework, the work of the election administration and campaign finance, the Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA) focused on human rights, rule of law, and democratic governance, TI Georgia monitored political finance, gender-related issues, and the Public Movement Multinational Georgia (PMMG) advocated for the rights of ethnic, religious, and linguistic minority communities.

the ruling party, which aimed to undermine public confidence in their credibility.¹³⁹ On election day, several citizen observer groups reported instances of intimidation of their representatives and interference of their work by polling personnel (see *Election Day*). The failure to safeguard the work of election observers is at odds with Georgia's OSCE commitments.¹⁴⁰

The December 2022, legal amendments introduced measures to prevent party-affiliated individuals from serving as citizen observers. However, some political parties continued to register their affiliates through citizen observer groups to increase their presence at polling stations. Reports from IEOM observers indicated that such individuals frequently interfered in PEC operations and were involved in the tracking of voters, often on behalf of the ruling party (see *Election Day*).¹⁴¹ The misuse of citizen observation for political purposes may have undermined the observers' watchdog role and, in some cases, contributed to an atmosphere of voter intimidation.

To ensure the integrity of election observation, authorities should guarantee that citizen observers can operate free from pressure or intimidation and have unimpeded access to all relevant information.

To maintain a clear separation between partisan and non-partisan observation, observer status should not be misused by political parties.

XV. ELECTION DAY

While procedurally election day was generally orderly administered, it was marked by a tense environment due to widespread indications of pressure on voters, numerous reports of voters feeling pressured, voter tracking primarily by ruling party structures and affiliates, overcrowding at many polling stations, and frequent breaches of vote secrecy. Additionally, several incidents of physical altercations and intimidation occurred.¹⁴² Access to polling stations posed significant challenges for voters with disabilities, as some 65 per cent of polling stations were difficult for wheelchair users to access, and 38 per cent had unsuitable interior layouts.

A. OPENING AND VOTING

Most polling stations opened on time, with only a few delays noted due to organizational issues and difficulties in setting up voter identification and vote counting devices (VIDs and VCDs). The opening of polls was positively evaluated at 212 of the 223 polling stations observed, with prescribed procedures

¹³⁹ On 24 September, the ACB designated TI Georgia as a 'subject with a declared electoral goal', following which the organization suspended their election observation activities. These activities only resumed after the ACB withdrew the designation on 2 October.

¹⁴⁰ Paragraph 8 of the [1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) states that "the participating States consider that the presence of observers, both foreign and domestic, can enhance the electoral process for States".

¹⁴¹ Two organizations with the highest numbers of individuals registered to observe, the International Observatory of Advocates and Lawyers (2,491 observers) and Politics and Law Observer (2,654 observers), as well as Training and Development Institute of Georgia (1,364 observers) were reported to have demonstrated affiliation with the ruling party. By contrast, observers from Free Voice (1,610 observers), Monitoring Centre – Society (1,038 observer), Social Environment (206 observers) and American Support League (234 observers) appeared to be associated with various opposition forces. While deploying considerable numbers of observers, similarly to previous elections, these groups did not publish any reports on their findings.

¹⁴² Most notably, there were reports of UNM activists injured in altercations in Marneuli and Tbilisi, where one of the UNM members required hospitalization. In Khobi, Tbilisi, Tsalenjikha, and Zugdidi, both opposition and ruling party supporters initiated verbal and physical confrontations. Opposition parties reported the presence of alleged criminal groups in the vicinity of polling stations in nine locations. During election day, the [president](#) and the [public defender](#) called for a response from the law enforcement agencies. In one instance, IEOM observers faced direct intimidation and damage to their vehicle.

largely followed. Negative assessments were primarily related to PEC's insufficient knowledge of the procedures or the presence of unauthorized persons, including candidate representatives and citizen observers, assisting in preparations for the opening.

In most cases, voting was assessed as procedurally well-organized. However, in 6 per cent of the 1,924 observations, which is a significant number, the process was assessed negatively, mainly due to indications of voter pressure and intimidation, sometimes accompanied by tension, unrest and overcrowding. While not against the law, party representatives, mostly from GD, video-recorded the voting process at most polling stations. This, as observed, had an intimidating effect, as the cameras were often directed at VIDs or polling booths, potentially compromising the secrecy of the vote.¹⁴³ Unknown individuals were observed tracking voters outside polling premises (10 per cent), frequently within the prohibited 100-metre perimeter. Party representatives in polling stations were also reported tracking voters in 7 per cent of the observations. This widespread perception of voter intimidation conflicts with OSCE commitments and other international standards.¹⁴⁴ IEOM observers reported group or family voting at 4 per cent of the polling stations. Observers received some credible reports on vote buying.¹⁴⁵

Effective measures should be taken to ensure that citizens exercise their voting rights in an atmosphere free from intimidation and pressure on election day, and the responsible authorities should address such practices and promptly respond to reported cases.

Potential compromises to vote secrecy were observed in 24 per cent of observations due to how ballots are inserted into ballot boxes, in 12 per cent due to how they marked their ballots, and in 7 per cent due to inadequate polling station layouts. IEOM observers identified several factors contributing to these breaches, including the proximity of PEC members, contestant representatives, or observers to ballot boxes or polling booths (16 per cent of all observations), overcrowding (16 per cent), improper use of sleeves or envelopes (9 per cent), marks bleeding through ballots (6 per cent), as well as the use of cameras, which could disclose voters' choices. These issues, compounded by rumours that VCDs could be used to track voters' choices, contributed to a perception among many voters that the secrecy of their vote was violated.

Authorities should take all necessary measures to ensure vote secrecy, including by improving polling station layouts and the design of the electoral materials. Election commissions should rigorously implement procedural safeguards, prevent overcrowding and undue tracking of voters at polling stations.

Additional serious procedural inconsistencies included voters' fingers not consistently checked for ink (7 per cent of all observations, including 10 per cent in polling stations using traditional voting method) or not always being inked before voting (4 per cent of all polling stations). Voter identification devices sometimes failed to read voters' IDs, requiring manual data entry, which was also necessary for voters using passports, making the process prone to human error and potential misuse. Several citizen observer organizations reported obstruction by PEC members during observation of voter verification and raised

¹⁴³ The CEC Decree No. 42/2012, which regulates the use of cameras in polling stations, prescribes that any recording must be conducted from a specifically designated place, at least three metres from the object where possible, ensuring that a ballot box is visible.

¹⁴⁴ Paragraph 7.7 of the 1990 [OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) requires campaigning to "be conducted in a fair and free atmosphere in which neither administrative action, violence nor intimidation bars the parties and the candidates from freely presenting their views and qualifications, or prevents the voters from learning and discussing them or from casting their vote free of fear of retribution". Paragraph 19 of the 1996 [UNCHR General Comment 25](#) to the ICCPR stipulates that "voters should be able to form opinions independently, free of violence or threat of violence, compulsion, inducement or manipulative interference".

¹⁴⁵ In addition, the CEC reported that voting was cancelled at one polling station in Marneuli due to ballot box stuffing.

concerns that the layout hindered meaningful observation, as voter registrar tables were frequently positioned to block clear view of the procedures.

To enhance the integrity of the voting process and strengthen public trust, the authorities should reinforce transparency and improve the rigour and effectiveness of voter identification procedures. For the use of voter identification devices, measures to minimize the manual entry of personal numbers at polling stations should be explored.

VIDs and VCDs were fully operational in 99 and 98 per cent of applicable cases, with exceptions mainly due to defective equipment and occasional synchronization issues between VIDs.¹⁴⁶ While almost all PECs were familiar with handling of the devices, in 9 per cent of cases, not all voters received adequate instructions on marking and casting ballots, which is an important measure to reduce invalid ballots and ensure vote secrecy. At polling stations using the traditional voting method, this procedure to instruct voters on the procedures was neglected by PEC registrars in 26 per cent of the observations. At 54 per cent of the polling stations using devices, some voters did not fully understand how to cast their ballots.

Party representatives were present at 97 per cent of polling stations, and citizen observers in 89 per cent, contributing to transparency. However, IEOM observers noted that in 28 per cent of cases, individuals accredited as observers appeared to act on behalf of contestants, undermining their watchdog role. In 7 per cent of observations, unauthorized persons, mainly contestant representatives and citizen observers, interfered in voter verification, provided instructions to voters, or assisted with ballot handling. Citizen observers also reported incidents of pressure and threats from PEC members and party representatives. In some cases, they were denied the right to file complaints with PECs, record their remarks in the PEC logbook, and, in isolated instances, were expelled from polling stations.

B. COUNTING AND TABULATION

Polling stations generally closed on time. Preliminary results were established by VCDs at polling stations using electronic devices, while official results were based on mandatory manual count at all polling stations.¹⁴⁷ IEOM observers assessed the counting negatively at 24 of the 195 polling stations observed, which is a high number, citing procedural errors and PECs' insufficient understanding of the procedures. Observed shortcomings included failing to follow the prescribed order in 50 cases, neglecting to invalidate unused ballots in 40 cases, and not packing electoral materials before starting the count according to procedures in 67 cases. In 28 cases, the choice on each ballot was not announced aloud during counting.

During the manual count, ballot validity was not fully determined according to regulations in 23 cases and was inconsistently applied in 21 cases, primarily at polling stations using VCDs. In 38 cases, minor discrepancies were observed between VCD results and manual counts, mainly due to differing criteria for ballot validity.¹⁴⁸ Observers noted difficulties in completing results protocols in 31 cases. Due to counting errors, corrections or recounts were requested in 42 instances. Contestant representatives and citizen observers were present at nearly all polling stations (188 and 176 observations, respectively). However, interference by contestant representatives, local or state officials, or citizen observers was observed in 27 instances. At 37 polling stations, the PECs did not publicly display a signed copy of the

¹⁴⁶ According to the CEC, of the total of 15,000 devices deployed on election day, only 20 experienced serious malfunctions, eventually being put out of operation; however, the voting process could continue without a need to revert to the traditional ballot casting method in all polling stations.

¹⁴⁷ After election day, the CEC informed that seven PECs had not correctly synchronized and consolidated results from all VCDs which led to significant discrepancies between the results of the manual count and the data reflected in the initial VCD results reports uploaded online.

¹⁴⁸ These differences included accepting ballots with incorrect marks where voter intent was clear or invalidating ballots with marks accidentally crossing the designated circles.

results protocol, limiting transparency.

On election night, DECAs were mandated to verify the correctness of PEC results protocols and, when necessary, conduct recounts to address discrepancies. Although the handling of election materials in all 73 DECAs observed was positively assessed, in 9 observations, the DECAs did not consistently verify the protocols, and in 5, DECAs did not perform this procedure at all. While precinct results and copies of protocols were promptly uploaded to the CEC website, other important data, such as voter turnout per polling station and the number of invalid votes were not published in user-friendly formats.¹⁴⁹ The tabulation of preliminary results was conducted at the CEC, without party representatives and observers. Most DECAs conducted the legally required district-level tabulation several days later, reducing transparency.

In line with legal provisions, amendments to results protocols in cases of discrepancies should occur at the DEC level and be conducted transparently, with the participation of party representatives and observers. The CEC should promptly publish voter turnout data alongside preliminary results and the number of invalid votes per polling station.

After the closing of the polls, the CEC posted partial results, received electronically from polling stations with devices, and announced preliminary results based on results from 97 per cent of these polling stations at 21:45.

XVI. POST-ELECTION DAY DEVELOPMENTS

On election night, shortly after the preliminary results were released, all opposition parties that passed the threshold, along with the president, rejected the results that indicated a victory of the ruling party. They cited irregularities reported by citizen observers and party representatives both before and on election day.¹⁵⁰ These included voter intimidation and impersonation, vote buying, breaches of vote secrecy, and alleged interference in the process from the Russian Federation. The government dismissed these claims and accused the opposition of intending to incite disorder.¹⁵¹

Preliminary reports from key observer organizations, many of which were published the day after, largely reflected their concerns about election-day based on the observations carried out by them.¹⁵² ISFED stated that the official preliminary results aligned with its parallel vote tabulation (PVT) but maintained that these results did not represent a genuine expression of the voters' will due to serious concerns about the process, and decided not to publish the PVT results. Also, two days after election day, the "My Vote for EU" observer coalition, led by TI Georgia, asserted that the observed and alleged violations were evidence of orchestrated electoral manipulation. Echoing these claims, on 31 October, all opposition parties announced plans to renounce their parliamentary seats, form an inter-party coalition with the president, and called for an international investigation into the electoral process.¹⁵³ Starting on 28 October, several rallies organised by opposition parties and civil society organisations took place in Tbilisi and Batumi, reiterating these demands. Of serious concern, on 19 November, the

¹⁴⁹ Using a double-entry procedure, data entry clerks at the CEC digitalized data from photos of results protocols sent by the PECs after the manual count.

¹⁵⁰ According to the CEC's [preliminary results](#), the GD won 54 per cent of votes, followed by *Ahali* with 11 per cent of votes, UNM with 10 per cent, "Strong Georgia – *Lelo*" with 8.8 per cent and "For Georgia" with 7.7 per cent.

¹⁵¹ The prime minister [stated](#) that the opposition "lacked the dignity to accept its defeat", while the speaker of the parliament [accused](#) the opposition and CSOs of spreading disinformation about electoral violations.

¹⁵² These reports noted various procedural irregularities and shortcomings, though not assessed as systemic or orchestrated, as well as isolated cases of major violations, such as vote buying, ballot box stuffing, intimidation of voters, and multiple voting. See reports by [ISFED](#), [GYLA](#), [TI Georgia's "My Vote for EU"](#), and [PMMG](#).

¹⁵³ See the [report](#) by "My Vote for EU".

police used excessive force to disperse a demonstration, which was condemned by CSOs and ODIHR as well as other international organizations (*see below for concerns about the handling of subsequent demonstrations*).¹⁵⁴

On 29 October, in accordance with the law, all DEC members conducted a recount of results from 366 randomly selected precincts. Some 91 per cent of the recounts confirmed the results initially reported by PECs, while 32 cases required minor modifications to the results protocols. The CEC also issued several statements denying allegations of manipulation, and, in some instances, reported intimidation or threats against its members, including the chairperson.¹⁵⁵

On election day and in the immediate aftermath, DEC members received 1,203 complaints from observers and contestants, including 537 requests for recounts or invalidation of results, 466 requests for disciplinary action against PEC members, and complaints about obstruction of observers' and party representatives' rights.¹⁵⁶ Most complaints were dismissed, with 170 fully or partially upheld, primarily concerning disciplinary actions for polling staff.¹⁵⁷ Another 107 complaints were dismissed on technical grounds. DEC members reviewed most complaints on their merits within legal deadlines, in open sessions. However, the handling of most complaints lacked substantive consideration, especially where multiple complaints were examined in a single session. Some DEC members restricted the right of complainants to be heard.¹⁵⁸

Sixty-six DEC decisions were appealed in district or city courts, all reviewed in public hearings.¹⁵⁹ Only two appeals were granted, but both were eventually overturned by the Court of Appeal in favour of the DEC members.¹⁶⁰ All appeals filed by observers and contestants in the Court of Appeal were dismissed, without the court providing legal or factual grounds.¹⁶¹ In one instance, the Tbilisi Court of Appeal failed to meet the legal two-day deadline for adjudication.¹⁶² In most observed hearings, the substantive

¹⁵⁴ ISFED, TI Georgia, and the Civil Society Foundation [condemned](#) the violations of freedoms of association and expression during the protest. On 19 November, the Public Defender's Office [reported](#) visiting 16 detainees and two hospitalised individuals; ten were reportedly victims of police ill-treatment or excessive force. ODIHR [expressed concerns](#) about the excessive use of force and urged authorities to engage in peaceful dialogue.

¹⁵⁵ Among other things, CEC statements addressed [allegations](#) of electoral manipulation, including multiple voting and widespread breaches of vote secrecy; the [quality](#) of ballot papers; [instances](#) of discrepancies observed between results produced by VCDs and the official PEC results protocols; alleged [irregularities](#) unearthed through the statistical examination of voter turnout or [through the analysis](#) of gender-related data of voters.

¹⁵⁶ Many complaints cited failures in inking procedures, unsealed election materials (such as mobile ballot boxes and PEC logbooks), or improper packaging of invalid ballots.

¹⁵⁷ Following 27 requests, results from 12 mobile ballot boxes were invalidated, although these largely overlapped with recounts conducted *ex officio* by DEC members.

¹⁵⁸ In all observed cases, DEC members were seemingly not provided with case materials in advance of the DEC session and, in many instances, made their decisions on the spot following a brief presentation of the case.

¹⁵⁹ The appeals were filed primarily regarding procedural irregularities, with some also addressing potential breaches of vote secrecy and alleged irregularities in the voter lists uploaded to the voter identification devices.

¹⁶⁰ Based on ISFED's appeal, the Gori district court ordered a recount of invalid ballots in 15 polling stations, while the Tetrtskaro court, acting on GYLA's appeal, found that the existing procedures did not ensure the secrecy of the vote and invalidated the results of 30 polling stations where technology was used. In Tetrtskaro, the court proactively brought in a vote-counting device to review the voting process. While GYLA lodged similar complaints in all district and city courts, all of its other appeals were dismissed, and the courts did not conduct similar examination of evidence.

¹⁶¹ While first-instance courts must issue motivated rulings within one day, the Court of Appeal is not under such obligation. The Kutaisi Court of Appeal consolidated several appeals lodged by GYLA and TI Georgia into a single case; after a two-day hearing, all appeals were dismissed. Similarly, the Tbilisi Court of Appeal merged 25 appeals, not all related to the same issues, and one from a DEC and dismissed all appeals lodged by citizen observers as ungrounded, while granting the DEC's appeal, following an almost 24-hour review. The Tbilisi Court of Appeals left six appeals without consideration due to the violation of deadlines, and dismissed the other 14 appeals as ungrounded.

¹⁶² The hearings on several appeals were initially scheduled for 6 November but were adjourned to the afternoon of 7 November, the final day for adjudication, and subsequently merged. The late start and voluminous nature of the appeals resulted in a failure to meet the deadline.

examination of cases was limited. Following the summarization of results by DECAs on 7 November, GYLA, UNM and “Strong Georgia – *Lelo*” filed complaints with the CEC to invalidate the results due to breaches of vote secrecy. These were dismissed by both the CEC and the court; the Court of Appeal examined the case without oral hearing.

The CEC announced the final results on 16 November in a session disrupted by opposition members, leading to a physical assault of the chairperson. Prior to the announcement, all elected MPs from the Coalition for Change, UNM and “Strong Georgia – *Lelo*” renounced their seats, while For Georgia declared the newly elected parliament illegitimate.¹⁶³ Subsequently, GYLA, UNM, Strong Georgia, and Gakharia for Georgia unsuccessfully challenged the final summary protocol in court, seeking its cancellation and a re-run. On 19 November, the president and 30 opposition MPs filed two lawsuits with the Constitutional Court challenging the constitutionality of the norms regulating the elections, and the elections held under them, citing failure to ensure vote secrecy and universal suffrage.¹⁶⁴ These lawsuits did not halt convening the first session of parliament and the announcement of recognition of mandates. The inaugural session of the parliament on 25 November was attended solely by GD MPs.

Of the 150 elected candidates, only 34 are women (23 percent), marking a slight increase from the previous composition, which was initially 21 percent and decreased to 19 percent over the term. Among the 89 MPs who took their seats, 12 (13 per cent) are women. On 30 November, the president declared the parliament illegitimate and claimed to be the sole “independent and legitimate institution” in the country. The Constitutional Court eventually found the appeals from the President and the 30 opposition MPs inadmissible on 3 December.

On 28 November, in response to EP statements on the elections, the government postponed EU accession negotiations until 2028 and rejected EU financial assistance until that date. This decision sparked large-scale protests in Tbilisi and other major cities. The Speaker of Parliament and government officials accused protesters of violent behaviour on various occasions. Some demonstrations led to violent clashes, were forcibly suppressed, and resulted in numerous arrests, raising serious concerns regarding compliance with OSCE commitments to freedom of assembly, as it was noted by several CSOs, ODIHR and international organizations.¹⁶⁵

On 14 December, a 300-member electoral college comprised of GD and affiliated legislature members, local, and regional councillors convened to elect a successor to President Zourabichvili as her term neared expiration. Amid ongoing protests in Tbilisi and other cities, Mikheil Kavelashvili was declared president as the sole candidate. President Zourabichvili, opposition parties, and several civil society organisations refused to recognise the election’s legitimacy, with President Zourabichvili stating her intent to remain in office until new parliamentary elections. On 16 December, the EU Foreign Affairs Council discussed recent developments in Georgia, noting democratic backsliding and announcing

¹⁶³ The Constitution mandates that the President convene the first meeting of the newly elected Parliament no later than the tenth day following the official announcement of election results. Parliament attains full authority once the mandates of at least 100 members are recognised. By law, the names of individuals whose election is contested before the Constitutional Court or courts of general jurisdiction must be excluded from the parliamentary resolution recognising the mandates of its members. By law, if the mandates of less than two-thirds of the members are recognized, the plenary session of Parliament shall be terminated. The Chairman of the CEC shall convene the next session of the newly elected Parliament within 10 days from the date when it becomes possible to submit for recognition the mandates of enough elected members to constitute up to two-thirds of the Parliament's full composition.

¹⁶⁴ The applicants claimed that the Election Code and CEC regulations violate Articles 3 (Democracy), 24 (Electoral Right), and 37 (Parliamentary Elections) of the Constitution, citing the non-opening of polling stations abroad in certain locations and failures to ensure vote secrecy. The Constitutional Court merged the two lawsuits citing the similarity of the requests.

¹⁶⁵ See the [statement](#) by ODIHR which condemns use of excessive force by police during the protests, also [Statement](#) by the OSCE Troika on the Situation in Georgia.

measures, including downgraded political contacts, suspension of funding, and impending visa restrictions on Georgian diplomats and officials due to the crackdown on opposition protesters.

Following the elections, the MIA initiated 54 election-related investigations (as of 29 November), charging three individuals in two criminal cases.¹⁶⁶ The Prosecutor's Office opened six cases, including five related to vote buying and one, at the CEC's request, alleging large-scale electoral fraud.¹⁶⁷ The Special Investigation Service has launched one criminal case into several incidents of possible illegal interference with a journalist's professional activity. However, none of the investigations had concluded by the time the final results were announced, limiting the effectiveness of these actions and further impacting trust in the handling of such matters.

Overall, the lack of a thorough review of election-day complaints and appeals by election commissions and courts, the dismissal of appeals on technical grounds or for insufficient substantiation, and the unduly short deadlines for filing appeals collectively undermined the right to due process and an effective remedy. Moreover, insufficient efforts by the authorities to address widespread concerns regarding the integrity of the electoral process failed to reduce political divisions and instead intensified the political crisis.

To provide for public trust in the electoral process and the integrity of results, legislation and public policy should ensure that public authorities operate independently, professionally, and efficiently, free from influence by the government or ruling party. Reports of election-day related irregularities and related complaints and appeals should be promptly and thoroughly addressed.

XVII. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations as contained throughout the text are offered with a view to further enhance the conduct of elections in Georgia and to support efforts to bring them fully in line with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections. These recommendations should be read in conjunction with past ODIHR recommendations that have not yet been addressed. ODIHR stands ready to assist the authorities of Georgia to further improve the electoral process and to address the recommendations contained in this and previous reports.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ The cases pertain to incidents involving violence or threats of violence, property damage, undue influence on a voter's free will, violations of ballot secrecy, coercion, and incitement to suicide.

¹⁶⁷ Four out of six cases concern possible offenses committed on the election day. Based on the CEC statement from 30 October, the Prosecution Service of Georgia has launched an investigation into the alleged falsification of the Elections under Article 164³ of the Criminal Code following public statements and allegations by the President of Georgia, representatives of political parties and other actors. According to the Prosecution Service, as part of the investigation, voter verification machines used for the parliamentary elections were first sealed in the CEC administrative building and information was retrieved from the verification devices with the direct involvement of Smartmatic company to carry out forensic examination. Additionally, a forensic chemical examination of the marking liquid used at the election precincts during the parliamentary elections has been commissioned. Political actors, civil society representatives and the CEC employees were summoned to testify in the framework of the investigation. No charges had been filed by the time of reporting.

¹⁶⁸ The follow-up of prior recommendations is assessed by the ODIHR EOM as follows: recommendations 10 and 20 from the final report of the 2020 parliamentary elections, and recommendations 10 and 16 from the final report of the 2021 local elections are fully implemented. Recommendation 15 from the final report of the 2018 presidential election, and recommendations 3, 12, and 25 of the 2020 parliamentary elections, and recommendation 18 from the final report of the 2021 local elections are mostly implemented. Recommendations 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 16, 17, 18, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 from the final report of the 2018 presidential election, recommendations 2, 5, 6, 7, 11, 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, 24, 30 from the final report of the 2020 parliamentary elections, and recommendations, and 4, 5, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19 from the final report of the 2021 local elections are partially implemented. See also the [ODIHR Electoral Recommendations Database](#).

A. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Authorities should proactively prevent voter intimidation, pressure on public employees, vote buying, electoral violence and educate voters about their rights. If such incidents occur, they should be promptly addressed to provide effective remedies and hold those responsible accountable.
2. A comprehensive legislative reform should be undertaken to implement outstanding ODIHR recommendations and further align the legal framework with OSCE commitments, international standards, and good practice. This review should be completed well in advance of the next election and through an inclusive and transparent consultative process.
3. Legislation that imposes limitations on the constitutionally guaranteed fundamental freedoms of assembly and expression should be repealed. Any restrictions on such fundamental freedoms must be exceptional, strictly proportionate to a legitimate aim, and imposed only to the extent necessary in a democratic society.
4. To strengthen impartiality of election administration, the appointment process for election commission members at all levels should be revised to prevent dominance by any single political party. To enhance operational efficiency and prevent overcrowding, the number of commissioners, particularly at the Precinct Election Commission level, should be adjusted to the actual needs.
5. To contribute to transparency and ensure equitable scrutiny of all political parties, the Anti-Corruption Bureau should develop clear regulations outlining the procedures for and methodology of political finance oversight.
6. The authorities should fulfil their duty to protect the safety of media staff through effective and timely protective measures. State authorities should promptly investigate and bring to justice those involved in attacks on, and ill-treatment of journalists and other media actors.
7. To further increase transparency and confidence in election dispute resolution, all disputes should be handled by election commissions collegially and in open sessions, based on thorough consideration of the substance of complaints. All judicial acts, decisions and protocols should be well substantiated and based on sound interpretation of the law and promptly published online.
8. To ensure the integrity of election observation, authorities should guarantee that citizen observers can operate free from pressure or intimidation and have unimpeded access to all relevant information. To maintain a clear separation between partisan and non-partisan observation, observer status should not be misused by political parties.
9. To provide for public trust in the electoral process and the integrity of results, legislation and public policy should ensure that public authorities operate independently, professionally, and efficiently, free from influence by the government or ruling party. Reports of election-day related irregularities and related complaints and appeals should be promptly and thoroughly addressed.
10. Contestants, public officials, and state institutions should refrain from misusing administrative resources for electoral purposes to ensure an equal playing field for electoral participants. In line with previous ODIHR and GRECO recommendations, consideration should be given to the adoption of further legislative and administrative measures to regulate the campaigning activities of high-level public officials, including mayors, and to prevent the circumvention of existing regulations.
11. Authorities should take all necessary measures to ensure vote secrecy, including by improving polling station layouts and the design of the electoral materials. Election commissions should rigorously

implement procedural safeguards, prevent overcrowding and undue tracking of voters at polling stations.

12. In line with international standards and OSCE commitments, authorities should put in place effective temporary special measures to eliminate discrimination against women in public and political life. Given their proven effectiveness, the authorities should give particular consideration to re-introducing the mandatory electoral gender quotas as well as the requirement that a woman withdrawing from her mandate as Member of Parliament be replaced by the next woman candidate on the same party list.

B. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Election Administration

13. To ensure stability and professional capacity of the election administration, the possibility to replace members of District Election Commission and Precinct Election Commission should be limited within a reasonable period of time prior to election day to allow for all members to undergo training.
14. In a coordinated effort, state and local authorities, along with all other relevant stakeholders, should undertake necessary measures to ensure independent access for persons with various disabilities throughout the entire election process, including the allocation of adequate premises for election commissions and polling stations

Voting Technologies

15. To strengthen confidence in the use of election technologies, the law should explicitly provide for independent third-party verification and certification of voter identification and vote-counting devices. Relevant stakeholders should be granted meaningful opportunities to scrutinize all aspects of the implementation process, including access to technical documentation, source code review, device configuration, and auditing procedures.

Voter Registration

16. To ensure effective exercise of active suffrage by all eligible voters, the authorities should implement appropriate legislative and administrative measures to ensure that all voters, including those lacking valid identification documents or a registered address, are included in the voter lists.
17. Persons who are recognized by a court to lack legal capacity on the grounds of intellectual or psychosocial disability and those who require inpatient care should be allowed to vote, in line with international standards.

Electoral Campaign

18. Authorities should take measures to promote gender equality in public and political life and ensure equal opportunities for women in the campaign, setting specific, measurable, and clearly defined goals and targets. Consideration should be given to the introduction of additional special measures to encourage political parties to support female candidates.

Campaign Finance

19. To fully guarantee the independence of the Anti-Corruption Bureau and its decisions from political influence, the mechanism for the appointment procedure for the head of the institution should be revised as well as the decision-making process of the Bureau.

20. Consideration could be given to developing a system of financial disclosure that ensures uniformity in the reporting formats utilized by political parties and presents such data in an accessible and user-friendly format, thereby strengthening mechanisms for public oversight.
21. To enhance transparency, legal provisions on third-party campaigning should be strengthened and clarified, with their application grounded in clear, objective, and foreseeable criteria to ensure consistency and avoid arbitrary enforcement that may infringe upon freedom of expression.

Media

22. To strengthen its independence, the appointment procedure for members of the Georgian National Communications Commission should be revised.
23. The existing system for allocation of free airtime and participation in debates should be reviewed to provide equal campaign opportunities for all contestants. Effective remedies for related violations should be applied promptly during the campaign. Consideration could be given to amending the law to prioritize compensation for lost airtime over financially sanctioning media outlets.
24. The media should be exempted from liability for disseminating unlawful statements made directly by parties or candidates, whether in the context of live broadcasting or advertising, unless the statements have been ruled unlawful by a court or the statements constitute direct incitement to violence.

Participation of National Minorities

25. To ensure equal access to information and ability to participate in the process, clear guidelines on the provision of voter information and materials in minority languages should be established. The user interface of the electronic voting technologies should be available in minority languages in areas mandated to provide voter materials in those languages.

Election Dispute Resolution

26. To guarantee effective remedy, the electoral dispute resolution framework should be reviewed to broaden the legal standing of voters, and adjust legal deadlines, allowing adequate time for the preparation and adjudication of complaints and administrative offences while ensuring duly expedited procedure, in line with international good practice.

Election day

27. To enhance the integrity of the voting process and strengthen public trust, the authorities should reinforce transparency and improve the rigour and effectiveness of voter identification procedures. For the use of voter identification devices, measures to minimize the manual entry of personal numbers at polling stations should be explored.
28. In line with legal provisions, amendments to results protocols in cases of discrepancies should occur at the DEC level and be conducted transparently, with the participation of party representatives and observers. The CEC should promptly publish voter turnout data alongside preliminary results and the number of invalid votes per polling station.

ANNEX I: FINAL ELECTION RESULTS¹⁶⁹

Total number of registered voters	3,508,294
<i>Number of voters on the special voter list for voting abroad</i>	95,910
Total number of votes cast (turnout)	2,111,834 (60.20 per cent)
Number of valid votes	2,076,779
Number of invalid votes	34,974 (1.66 per cent)

Candidate list (in order of appearance on the ballot)	Votes	Percentage	Mandates
No. 3 Party of Georgian Unity and Development	3,892	0.19	--
No. 4 Coalition for Change	229,161	11.03	19
No. 5 Unity – National Movement	211,216	10.17	16
No. 6 European Democrats	7,955	0.38	--
No. 8 Alliance of Patriots of Georgia	50,599	2.44	--
No. 9 Strong Georgia – Lelo, For People, For Liberty!	182,922	8.81	14
No. 10 Georgian Labour Party	15,103	0.73	--
No. 12 Our United Georgia	1,845	0.09	--
No. 16 Change Georgia	12,528	0.60	--
No. 17 Georgia	2,780	0.13	--
No. 20 Free Georgia	4,145	0.20	--
No. 21 Tribuna	2,483	0.12	--
No. 23 Us	2,593	0.12	--
No. 25 Gakharia For Georgia	161,521	7.78	12
No. 26 Left Alliance	1,260	0.06	--
No. 27 Georgian Unity	4,500	0.22	--
No. 36 Girchi	62,223	3.00	--
No. 41 Georgian Dream	1,120,053	53.93	89

¹⁶⁹ Based on the [CEC Summary Protocol of the Results of the Elections to the Parliament of Georgia of 26 October 2024](#), adopted on 16 November 2024.

ANNEX II: LIST OF OBSERVERS IN THE INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Pascal	Allizard	Special Coordinator, MP	France
Pia	Kauma	Head of Delegation, MP	Finland
Harald	Himmer	MP	Austria
Stefan	Schennach	MP	Austria
Klemens	Kofler	MP	Austria
Elisabeth	Kittl	MP	Austria
Oleg	Djachenko	MP	Belarus
Olgica	Tolić	Staff of Delegation	Croatia
Mihael	Zmajlović	MP	Croatia
Søren	Søndergaard	MP	Denmark
Kris Jensen	Skriver	MP	Denmark
Johannes	Koskinen	MP	Finland
Jean-Luc	Blouet	Staff of Delegation	France
Stéphanie	Koltchanov	OSCE PA Secretariat	France
Daniela	De Ridder	MP	Germany
Manfred	Grund	MP	Germany
Stefan	Keuter	MP	Germany
Tim	Knoblau	OSCE PA Secretariat	Germany
Zoltán	Bóna	MP	Hungary
Mauro	Del Barba	MP	Italy
Anna	Di Domenico	OSCE PA Secretariat	Italy
Roberto	Montella	OSCE PA Secretariat	Italy
Catia	Polidori	MP	Italy
Kairat	Tastekeyev	MP	Kazakhstan
Igors	Aizstrauts	Staff of Delegation	Latvia
Skaidrīte	Ābrama	MP	Latvia
Claude	Haagen	MP	Luxembourg
Fernand	Etgen	MP	Luxembourg
Liz	Braz	MP	Luxembourg
Marie-Pia	Bisenius	Staff of Delegation	Luxembourg
Jevrosima	Pejovć	MP	Montenegro
Farah	Karimi	MP	Netherlands
Henrica (Rian)	Vogels	MP	Netherlands
Siv	Mossleth	MP	Norway
Jan Tore	Sanner	MP	Norway
Barbara	Bartus	MP	Poland
Radosław	Fogiel	MP	Poland
Marcin	Mykietynski	Staff of Delegation	Poland
Katarzyna	Ueberhan	MP	Poland
Paweł	Zalewski	MP	Poland
Sherif	Abdili	OSCE PA Secretariat	Serbia
Dimitrije	Todorić	OSCE PA Secretariat	Serbia
Peder	Björk	MP	Sweden
Johan	Büser	MP	Sweden
Joar	Forsell	MP	Sweden

Kadir	Kasirga	MP	Sweden
Ulrik	Nilsson	MP	Sweden
Carina	Ödebrink	MP	Sweden
Jessica	Rodén	MP	Sweden
Fredrik	Svensson	Staff of Delegation	Sweden
Linnéa	Wickman	MP	Sweden
Daniel	Fässler	MP	Switzerland
Kamil	Aydın	MP	Türkiye
Kemal	Çelik	MP	Türkiye
Ecem	Danık Gökçe	Staff of Delegation	Türkiye
Mykyta	Poturaiev	MP	Ukraine
Serhii	Yevtushok	MP	Ukraine
Kyle	Parker	Staff of Delegation	United States
Bakhti	Nishanov	Staff of Delegation	United States
Shannon	Smirel	Staff of Delegation	United States

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Iulian	Bulai	Head of Delegation, MP	Romania
Blerina	Gjylameti	MP	Albania
Armen	Gevorgyan	MP	Armenia
Reinhold	Lopatka	MP	Austria
Katharina	Pabel	Venice Commission	Austria
Michael	Janssen	Venice Commission	Denmark
Anna-Kristiina	Mikkonen	MP	Finland
Sylvie	Affholder	PACE Secretariat	France
Bas	Klein	PACE Secretariat	France
Olivier	Bitz	MP	France
Carine	Roller-Kaufman	PACE Secretariat	France
Claude	Kern	MP	France
Didier	Marie	MP	France
Andrej	Hunko	MP	Germany
Frank	Schwabe	MP	Germany
Georgios	Stamatis	MP	Greece
Denise	O'Hara	MP	Ireland
Simone	Billi	MP	Italy
Aurora	Floridia	MP	Italy
Fabio	Pietrella	MP	Italy
Emanuelis	Zingeris	MP	Lithuania
Yves	Cruchten	MP	Luxembourg
Christophe	Brico	MP	Monaco
Béatrice	Fresko-Rolfo	MP	Monaco
Jone	Blikra	MP	Norway
Linda	Hofstad Helleland	MP	Norway
Ryszard	Petru	MP	Poland
Edite	Estrela	MP	Portugal
Bogdan	Torcătoriu	PACE Secretariat	Romania
Antonio	Gutiérrez	MP	Spain
	Limones		
Pablo	Hispán	MP	Spain
Boriana	Åberg	MP	Sweden

Pierre-Alain	Fridez	MP	Switzerland
Namık	Tan	MP	Türkiye
Oleksii	Goncharenko	MP	Ukraine
Olena	Khomenko	MP	Ukraine
Yevheniia	Kravchuk	MP	Ukraine
Lord David	Blencathra	MP	United Kingdom
Tara	Blencathra	Accompanying Person	United Kingdom

European Parliament

Antonio	López-Istúriz White	Head of Delegation, MEP	Spain
Marina	Graser Lasic	EP Secretariat	Croatia
Fidias	Panayiotou	MEP	Cyprus
Markéta	Gregorová	MEP	Czechia
Nathalie	Loiseau	MEP	France
Pierre	Pimpie	MEP	France
Hans	Neuhoff	MEP	Germany
Sven	Simon	MEP	Germany
Cristina	Castagnoli	EP Secretariat	Italy
Ieva	Valutyté	EP Secretariat	Lithuania
Tessel Dian Joel	Giele	EP Policy Advisor	Netherlands
Robert	Golanski	EP Policy Advisor	Poland

NATO Parliamentary Assembly

Faik	Öztrak	Head of Delegation, MP	Türkiye
Svitlana	Svyetova	NATO PA Secretariat	Belgium
Kristýna	Haráková	Staff of Delegation	Czechia
Jarmila	Levko	MP	Czechia
Carsten	Bach	MP	Denmark
Henrik	Bliddal	NATO PA Secretariat	Denmark
Valérie	Geffroy	NATO PA Secretariat	France
Natalia	Pouzyreff	MP	France
Pia	Califano	Staff of Delegation	Italy
Simona	Flavia Malpezzi	MP	Italy
Andrea	Giorgio Orsini	MP	Italy
Alberto	Losacco	MP	Italy
Paolo	Marcheschi	MP	Italy
Adriano	Paroli	MP	Italy
Matteo	Richetti	MP	Italy
Sven	Clement	MP	Luxembourg
Suzanne	Nollen	Staff of Delegation	Netherlands
Jimme	Nordkamp	MP	Netherlands
Marcin	Bosacki	MP	Poland
Piotr Jan	Woźniak	MP	Poland
Joanna	Kluzik-Rostkowska	MP	Poland
Ewa	Kołodziej	MP	Poland
Krzysztof	Mulawa	MP	Poland
Marcin	Przydacz	MP	Poland

Jarosław	Rusiecki	MP	Poland
Mirosław	Suchoń	MP	Poland
Wadim	Tyszkiewicz	MP	Poland
Andrzej	Szewiński	MP	Poland
Artur	Zaniewski	Staff of Delegation	Poland
Hugo	Patrício Oliveira	MP	Portugal
Luis	Piteiras Dias	MP	Portugal
Kerstin	Lundgren	MP	Sweden
Hikmet	Ilhan Iren	Staff of Delegation	Türkiye
Oğuz	Üçüncü	MP	Türkiye
Nigel Alexander	Dodds	MP	United Kingdom
Caroline	Dinenage	MP	United Kingdom
Lord Mark	Lancaster	MP	United Kingdom
Joe	Brinker	NATO PA Secretariat	United States

ODIHR EOM Short-term Observers

Lusine	Hakobyan	Armenia
Alisa	Hayrapetyan	Armenia
Shogher	Sahakyan	Armenia
Katharina	Stadler	Austria
Emanuel	Waldmüller	Austria
Verena	Wessely	Austria
Joris	Beckers	Belgium
Tom	De Munck	Belgium
Roxane	Henry	Belgium
Isabel	Leliaert	Belgium
Axel	Vandeputte	Belgium
Ann-Sophie	Vermeersch	Belgium
Christine	Cadieux	Canada
Adamou	Idrissa Hassan	Canada
Joseph	Landry	Canada
Andres	Lopez-Hoyos	Canada
Liesl	Mulholland	Canada
Jan	Blažek	Czechia
Barbora	Cardona Ševčíková	Czechia
Juraj	Fejer	Czechia
Marek	Fiebich	Czechia
Pavel	Hanosek	Czechia
František	Havlín	Czechia
Julia	Hawlanová	Czechia
Sylva	Horáková	Czechia
Václav	Hrabák	Czechia
Kristýna	Kabzanová	Czechia
Vincenc	Kopeček	Czechia
Václav	Kuželka	Czechia
Ondřej	Malý	Czechia
Anna-Marie	Peroutková	Czechia
Petr	Švepeš	Czechia

Zuzana	Tománková	Czechia
Jan	Udržal	Czechia
Pavel	Uhl	Czechia
Tereza	Virastová	Czechia
Tomáš	Vlach	Czechia
Mahmoud	Aladdin	Denmark
Nana Sofia	Hansen	Denmark
Søren	Hastrup	Denmark
Thorkild	Høyer	Denmark
Merete	Laubjerg	Denmark
Lise	Østergaard	Denmark
Hanne	Severinsen	Denmark
Birthe	Solevad	Denmark
Søren	Sønderstrup	Denmark
Henrik	Wittrup	Denmark
Ehtel	Halliste	Estonia
Artur	Kink	Estonia
Kaie	Kork	Estonia
Anu	Renser	Estonia
Griselda	Rosenberg	Estonia
Jaana	Karhilo	Finland
Kati	Mattsson	Finland
Mikko	Palonkorpi	Finland
Aurora	Saares	Finland
Alexandre	Billette	France
Alice	Bordaçarre	France
Zoé	de Nadai	France
Alexis	de Riverieulx de Varax	France
Hubert-Félix	Delattre	France
Pascal	Delumeau	France
Louise	Dumas	France
Anaïs	Fiault	France
Camille	Forite	France
Domitille	Gautier de Charnacé	France
Marc	Gruber	France
Eric	Hernault	France
Maylis	Huard de Verneuil	France
Thibaud	Kurtz	France
Jean-Charles	Lallemand	France
Stéphanie	Marsal	France
Anne	Maufrais	France
Cyrille	Montécot	France
Mathilde	Perrin	France
Maiwenn	Ratinet	France
Pascale	Trimbach	France
Matthias	Vazquez	France
Julien	Velcof	France
Yvonne	Bach	Germany
Stefan	Bitterle	Germany
Mareike	Bödefeld	Germany
Helmar	Böhnlein	Germany

Reinhard	Brysch	Germany
Tina	Debenham	Germany
Stephan	Fleig	Germany
Walter	Goepfert	Germany
Mirco	Grimm	Germany
Johannes	Hentschke	Germany
Alexandra	Huck	Germany
Joachim	Kaetzler	Germany
Gudula	Kilias	Germany
Helmut	Klawonn	Germany
Karin	Knöbelspies	Germany
Daniel	Kuehnhenrich	Germany
Günter	Lang-Lendorff	Germany
Monika	Lenhard	Germany
Rodrigo	Morales Schaack	Germany
Susanne	Neymeyer	Germany
Cosima	Peissker-Meyer	Germany
Karin	Pluberg	Germany
Christine	Radomsky	Germany
Stephan	Reitze	Germany
Anne	Renschmid	Germany
Kerstin	Roeske	Germany
Petra	Ruth	Germany
Oliver	Scheel	Germany
Jannika	Schlitt	Germany
Tillmann	Schneider	Germany
Jasmina	Schroff	Germany
Christine	Smers	Germany
Valerio	Trabandt	Germany
Anja	van Eickels	Germany
Dimitrios	Kanakidis	Greece
Győző	Gábel	Hungary
Tamás	Gebei	Hungary
Anita	Marton	Hungary
Gudni	Bragason	Iceland
Estrid	Brekkan	Iceland
Kristján	Haraldsson Johannessen	Iceland
Les	Allamby	Ireland
Paul	Anderson	Ireland
Peter	Ballagh	Ireland
Mary	Dowling	Ireland
James	McCarthy	Ireland
Muireann	O Briain	Ireland
Teresa	Reilly	Ireland
Richard	Wright	Ireland
Andrea	Manta	Italy
Debora	Pinzana	Italy
Uran	Akhmetov	Kyrgyzstan
Aizada	Damir Kyzy	Kyrgyzstan
Ieva	Ruņģe	Latvia
Jurgita	Banytė	Lithuania

Dominyka	Dautaraitė	Lithuania
Konstantinas	Dureiko	Lithuania
Evaldas	Galvanauskas	Lithuania
Kristina	Tamošaitytė	Lithuania
Maria	Bergervoet	Netherlands
Ryan	Jessurun	Netherlands
Jannetje	Klein	Netherlands
Marlijn	Lelieveld	Netherlands
Tekke	Panman	Netherlands
Bregje	Prins	Netherlands
Sjoerd	ten Wolde	Netherlands
Sophie	van de Meulengraaf	Netherlands
Orrvar	Dalby	Norway
Hanne	Hanson	Norway
Marianne	Lyseng	Norway
Eldrid	Røeine	Norway
Adam	Adamus	Poland
Mateusz	Bajek	Poland
Elzbieta	Ciesielska	Poland
Paulina	Czarnecka	Poland
Anna	Gawłowska	Poland
Marcin	Grabia	Poland
Elzbieta	Hryciuk	Poland
Maciej	Jakubik	Poland
Justyna	Jakubowska	Poland
Mateusz	Kamionka	Poland
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ABOUT ODIHR

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is OSCE's principal institution to assist participating States "to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, to abide by the rule of law, to promote principles of democracy and (...) to build, strengthen and protect democratic institutions, as well as promote tolerance throughout society" (1992 Helsinki Summit Document). This is referred to as the OSCE human dimension.

ODIHR, based in Warsaw (Poland), was created as the Office for Free Elections at the 1990 Paris Summit and started operating in May 1991. One year later, the name of the Office was changed to reflect an expanded mandate to include human rights and democratization. Today, it employs over 150 staff.

ODIHR is the lead agency in Europe in the field of **election observation**. Every year, it co-ordinates and organizes the deployment of thousands of observers to assess whether elections in the OSCE region are conducted in line with OSCE commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections and with national legislation. Its unique methodology provides an in-depth insight into the electoral process in its entirety. Through assistance projects, ODIHR helps participating States to improve their electoral framework.

The Office's **democratization** activities include: rule of law, legislative support, democratic governance, migration and freedom of movement, and gender equality. ODIHR implements a number of targeted assistance programmes annually, seeking to develop democratic structures.

ODIHR also assists participating States' in fulfilling their obligations to promote and protect **human rights and fundamental freedoms** consistent with OSCE human dimension commitments. This is achieved by working with a variety of partners to foster collaboration, build capacity and provide expertise in thematic areas, including human rights in the fight against terrorism, enhancing the human rights protection of trafficked people, human rights education and training, human rights monitoring and reporting, and women's human rights and security.

Within the field of **tolerance and non-discrimination**, ODIHR provides support to the participating States in strengthening their response to hate crimes and incidents of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. ODIHR's activities related to tolerance and non-discrimination are focused on the following areas: legislation; law enforcement training; monitoring, reporting on, and following up on responses to hate-motivated crimes and incidents; as well as educational activities to promote tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding.

ODIHR provides advice to participating States on their policies on **Roma and Sinti**. It promotes capacity-building and networking among Roma and Sinti communities, and encourages the participation of Roma and Sinti representatives in policy-making bodies.

All ODIHR activities are carried out in close co-ordination and co-operation with OSCE participating States, OSCE institutions and field operations, as well as with other international organizations.

More information is available on the ODIHR website (www.osce.org/odihr).