



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

February 2015

OSCE/ODIHR NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION REPORT

27-29 October 2014



Warsaw
25 November 2014

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**REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN
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OSCE/ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report

I. INTRODUCTION

In anticipation of an invitation from the authorities of the Republic of Tajikistan to observe the 2015 parliamentary elections and in accordance with its mandate, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) undertook a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) to Tajikistan from 27 to 29 October 2014. The NAM included Dr. Richard Lappin, OSCE/ODIHR Senior Election Adviser, Mr. Alexey Gromov, OSCE/ODIHR Election Adviser, and Ms. Maria Chepurina, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Programme Officer.

The purpose of the mission was to assess the pre-election environment and the preparations for the parliamentary elections. Based on this assessment, the NAM recommends whether to deploy an OSCE/ODIHR election-related activity for the forthcoming elections, and if so, what type of activity best meets the identified needs. Meetings were held with officials from state institutions and the election administration, as well as with representatives of political parties, media, civil society and the resident international community. A list of meetings is annexed to this report.

The OSCE/ODIHR would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the OSCE Office in Tajikistan for their assistance in organizing the visit. The OSCE/ODIHR would also like to thank all of its interlocutors for taking the time to meet with the mission and to share their views.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Supreme Assembly of the Republic of Tajikistan (*Majlisi Oli*) has two chambers. The lower chamber (*Majlisi Namoyandagon*) has 63 members who are directly elected for a five-year term, of whom 22 are elected from political party lists under a nationwide proportional system and 41 from single-mandate districts. The elections are expected to be held at the end of February 2015, together with regional and local elections.

Amendments to the parliamentary elections law (PEL) in March and July 2014 are generally in line with previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, including a reduction in the financial deposit for candidates, measures to limit the role of local officials in campaign events, and simplified voting procedures. However, a number of other OSCE/ODIHR recommendations remain unaddressed, including in respect of unreasonable restrictions on candidacy, undue limitations on freedom of expression, and the lack of provisions for non-partisan citizen election observation. Proposals of several political parties to lift the financial deposit and ensure balanced representation in election commissions were rejected.

The election administration for parliamentary elections operates at three levels: the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda (CCER), 41 District Election Commissions, and some 3,180 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs). Many OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns about the composition and independence of the election administration, particularly in respect of the conduct of election day procedures, the vote count, and tabulation of results.

Voter registration is passive and voter lists are compiled by the PECs for each election based on data provided by local authorities. There is no central voter register and several OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concern about the accuracy of voter lists due to the lack of aggregated

data above precinct level. The number of voters is estimated at 4.2 million, including a large number residing abroad. Voters are offered several alternative voting options, such as early voting, mobile voting and voting abroad, but the PEL does not provide clear rules for their implementation.

The right to stand is limited to citizens above 25 years of age, with a higher education, knowledge of the state language, and citizenship for the past five years. Restrictions on the right to stand for people in certain professional occupations, prisoners and those under investigation for serious crimes are also imposed. The OSCE/ODIHR has previously recommended that unreasonable restrictions on candidacy rights be removed.

Candidates can be nominated by political parties or via self-nomination in single-mandate districts and by parties for the nationwide contest. Independent candidates must support their nomination with 500 supporting signatures. There are no special legislative measures to promote women candidates. All candidates are required to pay a financial deposit, which according to most parties represents a considerable barrier for fielding candidates despite the amount having been halved as part of the recent reforms. Some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors also expressed concerns about the lack of clear rules regarding the verification of supporting signatures and the assessment of state language competency, notwithstanding some recent CCER regulations on these issues.

The campaign is anticipated to focus on peace and stability, social welfare, and the secular status of the country. While the authorities expect an active campaign and high voter turnout, others noted a growing level of voter apathy. Some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors anticipate problems with organizing campaign events due to administrative obstacles from local authorities and the lack of public awareness, especially outside of urban areas.

State-owned television and radio represent the main source of information and contestants have the right to free airtime and participation in pre-recorded televised debates. However, according to most parties, the amount of free airtime is not sufficient for a meaningful campaign, especially as other forms of campaign coverage are limited. Print media provides a space for alternative opinions, despite low circulation. The role of Internet-based news sources is increasingly important, however, access has been regularly blocked throughout the current year. OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors also reported various other legal and administrative pressures used to curtail independent journalism.

Political parties and candidates can fund their campaigns from their own resources and donations from individuals and legal entities, except from foreign or state-owned sources. There is no direct public campaign financing. Most political parties noted that they lacked the financial resources to mount an effective campaign. The CCER oversees campaign finance rules, but no deadlines and details for reporting by parties and candidates are defined in the law.

While observers from political parties, candidates and international organizations are foreseen by the law, the legislation does not provide for non-partisan citizen election observation. The OSCE/ODIHR NAM was informed that an official invitation will be extended to the OSCE and other international bodies.

All interlocutors met with during the OSCE/ODIHR NAM underscored the need for an OSCE/ODIHR election activity. While some previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations have been addressed, a number of issues would merit further attention. Based on the findings of this report, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an election observation mission for the upcoming parliamentary elections. In addition to a core team of experts, the OSCE/ODIHR

recommends the secondment of 20 long-term observers and 150 short-term observers from OSCE participating States.

III. FINDINGS

A. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

Tajikistan's bicameral Supreme Assembly (*Majlisi Oli*) is vested with legislative power. The lower chamber (*Majlisi Namoyandagon*) has 63 members of parliament (MP) directly elected for a five-year term.¹ Although the 2015 parliamentary elections are yet to be officially called, several OSCE/ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) interlocutors expected the elections to take place on 28 February.² Regional and local elections will be held on the same day as the parliamentary elections.

Tajikistan has eight registered political parties. Following the last parliamentary elections in February 2010, the People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan (PDPT), led by the incumbent President Emomali Rahmon, obtained 45 of the 63 seats in the lower chamber. Other parties represented in the parliament are the Agrarian Party of Tajikistan (APT), the Communist Party of Tajikistan (CPT), the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), and the Party of Economic Reform of Tajikistan (PERT), each with two seats. The remaining seats are held by independent MPs. Thirteen of the MPs elected in 2010 were women. The parties not represented in the parliament are the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), the Social-Democratic Party of Tajikistan (SDPT), and the Socialist Party of Tajikistan (SPT).

An initiative to form a new party, the New Tajikistan Party, was hindered by the detention and the subsequent conviction of its founder, the former Minister of Industry, Zayd Saidov.³ A number of OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors, as well as international organizations, have expressed concern at reports of politically motivated harassment of opposition political leaders.⁴

These elections will be the fourth parliamentary elections since the end of the 1992-1997 civil war. The authorities noted the importance of a calm and stable electoral process, particularly in light of regional security concerns and the draw-down of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

The OSCE/ODIHR has observed five elections in Tajikistan. The Election Observation Mission for the most recent parliamentary elections in 2010 concluded that "the elections failed to meet many key OSCE commitments contained in the OSCE 1990 Copenhagen Document and other international standards for democratic elections. Neither was domestic legislation fully respected. Notable shortcomings occurred regarding respect of legal provisions on complaints and the law was

¹ The upper chamber (*Majlisi Milli*) has 33 members, of whom 8 are appointed by the president and 25 are indirectly elected by the councils of the regions and cities.

² The president must call elections for the *Majlisi Namoyandagon* 75 days prior to the expiry of the current parliament's mandate.

³ On 6 April 2013, when the initiative to establish the party was announced, Mr. Saidov stated that the party intended to participate in the 2015 parliamentary elections. On 25 December 2013, Mr. Saidov was sentenced to 26 years in prison.

⁴ See the UN Human Rights Committee's 2013 Concluding Observations on Tajikistan at: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2fTJK%2fCO%2f2&Lang=en.

inconsistently applied with regard to campaign regulations. Serious irregularities took place on election day, including a high incidence of observed proxy voting.”⁵

B. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Parliamentary elections are primarily regulated by the 1994 Constitution and the 1999 Constitutional Law on the Elections to the *Majlisi Oli* (parliamentary elections law, PEL), last amended in March and July 2014. The legal framework also includes the 1998 Law on Political Parties, the 1998 Law on Public Meetings, the 2008 Civil Procedures Code, the 1998 Criminal Code, the 1996 Law on Citizens’ Complaints to Government Bodies, the 2013 Law on Periodical Print and Other Mass Media, as well as Central Commission for Elections and Referenda (CCER) instructions.

The 2014 amendments to the PEL are generally in line with several longstanding OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, including a reduction of the financial deposit required to stand as a candidate, further details on the number of valid support signatures necessary for candidate registration, measures to limit the participation of local officials in campaign events, and simplified voting procedures.

The CCER has also passed several decisions clarifying aspects of the electoral process, including regulations for District Election Commissions (DECs), Precinct Election Commissions (PECs), media, election observers, and rules for testing language proficiency. The CCER also stated its intention to revise the boundaries of electoral districts once elections are called so as to ensure the equality of the vote, as per an earlier OSCE/ODIHR recommendation.

However, a number of other OSCE/ODIHR recommendations remain unaddressed in the law, including in respect of unreasonable restrictions on candidacy, undue limitations on freedom of expression, unclear jurisdiction over complaints and appeals procedures, and the lack of provisions for non-partisan citizen election observation. Several political parties met with by the OSCE/ODIHR NAM noted that their proposals to lift the financial deposit and to ensure balanced representation in election commissions were rejected.

The elections will be held according to a mixed proportional-majoritarian system. Of the 63 MPs, 41 will be elected from single-mandate districts in two-round majoritarian elections,⁶ with the other 22 elected under a proportional closed-list system with a five per cent threshold. A 50 per cent turnout is required for elections to be valid; otherwise, repeat elections must be held.

C. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Parliamentary elections are administered by a three-level structure: the CCER, 41 DECs, one in each of the 41 single-mandate districts, and some 3,180 PECs. Additional polling stations will be established outside of Tajikistan to facilitate out-of-country voting.

The CCER, a permanent body composed of 15 members, is elected by the lower chamber of the parliament for a five-year term based on proposals of the president. The CCER’s current term is due to end in December but it is expected to be renewed when the elections are officially called. Eight of the current CCER members represent all the registered political parties, despite a lack of corresponding provisions and criteria for their appointment in the PEL. Several OSCE/ODIHR

⁵ All previous OSCE/ODIHR reports on Tajikistan are available at: www.osce.org/odihr/elections/tajikistan.

⁶ If no candidate receives more than 50 per cent of the valid votes cast in the first round, the two top candidates compete in the second round held within two weeks.

NAM interlocutors expressed concerns that the appointment mechanism does not provide independence from the government.

The CCER is responsible for the conduct of the elections including the delineation of electoral districts, appointment of DEC, registration of national lists of candidates, and the review of complaints against decisions and actions of lower-level commissions. The CCER informed the OSCE/ODIHR NAM that preparations are already underway for the upcoming elections, including a nationwide training programme for potential DEC and PEC members, the publication of instructions, and the preparation of a voter information programme. The CCER intends to translate several instructions into English and Russian, while a decision to translate voter education materials into national minority languages has not yet been taken.

With support from the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, the CCER is updating its website and intends to post all election-related decisions and other information online, thereby enhancing transparency and addressing a prior OSCE/ODIHR recommendation. However, the CCER noted that it will not publish election results disaggregated by district and polling station due to potential shortages of electricity in rural areas that would impact electronic communication.

The DECs are formed at least two months prior to election day and consist of at least nine members. They are appointed on the basis of proposals from the local authorities, with suggestions from political parties taken into account. The nomination and selection of DEC and PEC members is not regulated by the law. The CCER noted that further amendments to the PEL are being considered in order to fill this gap prior to the upcoming elections. The DECs establish polling stations and appoint the relevant PECs, register majoritarian candidates, organize campaign meetings, and decide on complaints against decisions and actions of the PECs.

The PECs are formed 45 days before the elections and have 5 to 19 members. The PECs compile voter lists, conduct election day procedures and decide on election day complaints. Many OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns about the lack of impartiality and transparency in PEC and DEC work, particularly in respect of election day procedures, the vote count, and the tabulation of results.

Voters who cannot visit a polling station on election day are offered several alternative voting options. Voters absent from their residence on election day may vote in advance at DECs in the two weeks prior to election day provided they submit a written justification, while mobile voting is permitted for homebound voters. A number of special polling stations will also be established in hospitals and military facilities, as well as outside of the country. The PEL does not provide clear rules for the administration of the alternative voting options.

In line with a longstanding OSCE/ODIHR recommendation, the so-called 'negative' voting was abolished and voters are now required to affirmatively mark their ballots in favour of a contestant rather than voting against all other options.⁷ This will require specific efforts from the authorities to train polling staff on voting and counting procedures, as well as to inform voters.

D. VOTER REGISTRATION

Citizens who are 18 years or older on election day have the right to vote, except those who have been declared incapacitated or are serving a prison sentence, regardless of the severity of the crime

⁷ The 'negative' vote procedure has not been removed for regional and local elections and according to the CCER is pending consideration.

committed. The number of voters is estimated at 4.2 million. A large number of voters reside abroad, although estimates of their total number vary significantly. According to the OSCE/ODIHR interlocutors, a lack of clear information regarding the registration of voters abroad could potentially impact their right to vote, to support candidates, and to campaign.

Voter registration is passive and is administered locally without a central voter register. Citizens are included in the voter lists according to their place of permanent or temporary residence. Each PEC compiles a voter list based on data provided by local authorities. Voter lists are open for scrutiny for 15 days before an election. During this period and on election day a voter can be added to the list upon proof of residence. The law provides for door-to-door checks to verify voter lists. Several OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concern about the accuracy of voter lists due to the lack of aggregated data above the precinct level, which could have a particular impact on early and out-of-country voting. The CCER informed the OSCE/ODIHR NAM that it has been unable to address a prior recommendation to create a centralized voter register due to a lack of financial resources.

E. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Candidates are required to be above 25 years of age, have a higher education, command of the state language, and citizenship for the last five years. Military personnel, law enforcement officials, and religious functionaries are not allowed to stand for election. Individuals convicted of a serious crime, those with unexpunged record in connection with any other crime, as well as those under investigation for committing serious crimes are also not permitted to stand as candidates. The OSCE/ODIHR has previously recommended that unreasonable restrictions on the right to be elected be removed, including those relating to higher education, criminal records, and investigations.

Party lists for the nationwide contest can be put forward from the moment of the announcement of the elections, while candidates for single-mandate districts can be nominated from 60 days before the elections. The nomination period for both concludes 45 days before election day. Parties are entitled to put forward a list of no more than 28 candidates for the nationwide constituency and one candidate in each single-mandate district. A person can be nominated both on a party list and in one single-mandate district. Independent candidates can register only in single-mandate districts. The PEL does not provide for the formation of pre-election coalitions, while the Law on Political Parties explicitly allows them. There are no special legislative measures to promote women candidates, although all parties stated an intention to ensure a degree of gender balance on their candidate lists.

The law requires a variety of documentation to support candidate nominations,⁸ as well as a financial deposit of TJS 4,000 (EUR 615) for each candidate, including those on a party lists.⁹ The amount of the deposit was halved in March 2014, partially addressing a previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendation. However, most political parties stated that the deposit remains unduly high and represents a considerable barrier for fielding a full range of candidates. Financial deposits are returned only to parties that receive more than 5 per cent of the valid votes nationwide and to majoritarian candidates that receive at least 10 per cent of the votes in their respective districts.

In addition to the electoral deposit, self-nominated candidates are required to collect at least 500 support signatures of voters from within the relevant district. Voters can sign in support of only one

⁸ Documentation includes a decision of the party on nomination of candidates; biographies of candidates with detailed personal information; statements from each candidate consenting to terminate any activities incompatible with an MP's mandate if elected; statements of property and income of each candidate; medical certificates; and documents certifying the absence of criminal records or their status for each candidate.

⁹ EUR 1 is approximately TJS (Tajik Somoni) 6.5.

nominee. The CCER confirmed that voters abroad are not allowed to sign in support of a candidate unless they return to the country.

Several OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns related to the registration procedures as the law and the recent CCER regulations do not provide clear rules and criteria for the verification of support signatures and for the assessment of the state language knowledge, which may lead to arbitrary implementation.

F. CAMPAIGN AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE

The official election campaign starts once a candidate or party list is registered and ends 24 hours before election day. The CCER is responsible for ensuring equal campaign conditions for parties and candidates, including in the media. The DECs, supported by the local authorities, assist candidates in organizing campaign meetings. Following recent legal amendments, local officials are no longer permitted to chair campaign events. The Ministry of Interior confirmed that, according to the law, all public campaign events require prior approval of the authorities in order to ensure public order. Some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors anticipate problems with organizing campaign events due to administrative obstacles from local authorities and a lack of public awareness, especially outside of urban centres.

All eight registered parties intend to participate in the upcoming elections, with some opposition parties stating their intention to co-ordinate efforts with a view to splitting the costs and enhancing their chances of being elected. The campaign is expected to focus on issues of peace and stability, social welfare, and the secular status of the country. One party publicly called for President Rahmon to “provide free and fair elections” and not to misuse his position during the campaign.¹⁰ While the authorities expect an active campaign and high voter turnout, other interlocutors noted a growing level of voter apathy.

Political party and campaign finance rules have not undergone significant change since the last parliamentary elections. There is no direct public financing for parliamentary election campaigns and most political parties noted that they lacked the financial resources to mount an effective campaign. Candidates can fund their campaigns from their own resources and donations from individuals and legal entities, except from foreign or state-owned sources. Campaign spending for a party is limited to TJS 1.2 million and for a candidate to TJS 60,000. All campaign funds must be deposited and spent from special bank accounts, opened for the elections. The CCER is authorised to oversee campaign finance rules, but no deadlines and details for reporting by contestants are defined in the law. Violations of campaign finance rules may lead to deregistration of a contestant.

G. MEDIA

The Constitution provides for freedom of expression and information, and prohibits censorship. In a positive step, the Criminal Code was amended in 2012 to partially decriminalize defamation. However, criminal penalties for insulting the president or other officials remain in place. The 1996 Law on Television and Broadcasting and the 2013 Law on Periodical Print and Other Mass Media provide for improved access to information and include some guarantees for the rights of journalists, if implemented fully.

¹⁰ On the statement of the Political Council of the SDPT see <http://www.asiaplus.tj/ru/node/197253> (in Russian).

Several OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors indicated that various legal and administrative means, such as revocation of licenses, targeted tax inspections, denial of the use of printing facilities, and limitations on distribution methods are used to curtail independent journalism. Numerous media interlocutors affirmed to the OSCE/ODIHR NAM that self-censorship is a common practice due to fear of administrative pressure. Moreover, several libel court cases, not related to the elections, resulted in high fines against journalists from private media. According to some media interlocutors, in September, Tajikistan's Islamic Centre announced that co-operation with any media outlets whose goal is to destabilize Tajikistan is a great sin for Muslims and condemned the critics of the authorities.

Only state-owned television and radio enjoy nationwide coverage and they represent the main source of information throughout the country. Several private electronic media cover local areas, predominantly in urban centres. Power outages in rural areas, especially in winter, limit the extent to which the population can receive news from broadcast media. Print media comprise some 400 newspapers, with the majority published once or twice a week. Several OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors stated that print media generally provides more space for alternative opinions, although the circulation is low and the distribution is limited mainly to Dushanbe and larger urban areas.

While the number of Internet users is still relatively low and confined to urban areas,¹¹ the role of web-based news sources and social media as platforms for exchange of views is increasingly important. However, a number of OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that access to social networks and websites offering news has been blocked regularly throughout the current year, without any meaningful explanation or remedial action by the relevant authorities. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media called this "a disturbing and worrying trend" and called on the authorities "to ensure that all citizens in Tajikistan have unhindered access to information, offline and online."¹²

In line with the latest amendments to the PEL, each majoritarian candidate has the right to 20 minutes of free airtime on state television and radio during the entire campaign period and each party list has the right to 40 minutes. Although this represents an increase from past elections, several parties informed the OSCE/ODIHR NAM that the amount of free airtime is too limited to allow for a meaningful campaign, especially as they expect that only minimal coverage will be provided in the news to contestants other than the ruling party.

The State Committee on Television and Radio (SCTR) regulates the broadcast media and, together with the CCER, oversees the allocation of free airtime during the campaign period. The SCTR informed the OSCE/ODIHR NAM that state broadcasters will only air pre-recorded campaign materials. In case the materials submitted by contestants discredit the honour and dignity of other candidates, the corresponding content will be cut. Candidate debates are expected to be aired by state media, in accordance with CCER instructions. A specialized SCTR unit will conduct media monitoring with a view to assessing the compliance of campaign coverage with the law. Some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors encouraged independent media monitoring during the campaign.

H. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Electoral disputes fall under the dual jurisdiction of election commissions and courts. Decisions of lower-level election commissions may be appealed to either superior election commissions or

¹¹ Estimated at 16 per cent of the population in 2014. See: www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users-by-country.

¹² See www.osce.org/fom/125218, www.osce.org/fom/121537, and www.osce.org/fom/119670.

courts, with the Supreme Court as a final instance in all cases. CCER decisions can be appealed to the Supreme Court. Complaints and appeals can be filed by political parties, candidates, their proxies, voters and observers within 10 days of a decision, with an adjudication period of 3 days. If a complaint is filed less than six days before election day, it should be considered immediately.

According to the Supreme Court, all election-related hearings are public, but the decisions of courts are issued only to the parties to the case and are not published. Although judicial remedies for violations of electoral rights are generally provided by the law, several political parties expressed a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of the redress system, mainly due to a perceived lack of independence of the judiciary, election administration, and law enforcement bodies.¹³

Despite few formal complaints in previous elections, the CCER and the Supreme Court informed the OSCE/ODIHR NAM of efforts to train lower-level commissions and courts in handling complaints.

I. ELECTION OBSERVATION

The law stipulates that political parties and self-nominated candidates have the right to field election observers. The PEL allows international observers and representatives of the media to follow the electoral process, but it does not provide for non-partisan observation by citizen observer groups, which is not fully in line with paragraph 8 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.

All parties declared their intention to field observers on election day in order to provide transparency and counter potential irregularities, especially during counting. All interlocutors saw the need for and the added value that would be brought by the deployment of an OSCE/ODIHR observation activity for the upcoming elections, with a particular focus on election day procedures. The authorities stated that an official invitation would be extended to the OSCE and other international bodies in due course.

The PEL does not grant observers access to all stages of the electoral process and is silent on whether observers are entitled to receive copies of protocols in polling stations and DEC's. The law enables media to be present at all sessions of election commissions and in polling stations on election day. Private media interlocutors informed the OSCE/ODIHR NAM that in the past journalists have faced restricted access to polling stations.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

All interlocutors met with during the OSCE/ODIHR NAM underscored the need for an OSCE/ODIHR election observation activity. While some OSCE/ODIHR recommendations have been addressed, a number of issues merit further attention. This includes the implementation of the amended legal framework, the work of the election administration, candidate registration, respect of freedoms of assembly and expression during the campaign, electoral dispute resolution, and the conduct of election day procedures, including the vote count and tabulation of results.

Based on the findings of this report, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an election observation mission for the upcoming parliamentary elections. In addition to a core team of experts, the OSCE/ODIHR will request the secondment by OSCE participating States of 20 long-

¹³ In paragraph 18 of the UN Human Rights Committee's 2013 Concluding Observations on Tajikistan (*op.cit.* footnote 4), the authorities were urged to intensify efforts in reforming the judiciary and to take effective measures to guarantee the competence, independence, and the tenure of judges.

term observers to follow the election process countrywide, as well as 150 short-term observers to follow election day procedures, including voting, counting of votes, and tabulation of results. Concurrent local and regional elections will be observed only to the extent that they have an impact on the overall conduct of the parliamentary elections.

ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Idibek Kalandarov, Head of Department of International Organizations
Saida Iskandarova, Third Secretary

Ministry of Interior

Ikrom Umarzoda, Deputy Minister

Central Commission for Elections and Referenda

Shermukhammad Shohiyon, Chairperson
Aminjon Hasanov, Senior Adviser

Supreme Court

Makhmudjon Ashurov, First Deputy Chairperson
Lola Khojaeva, Presiding Judge for Civil Cases
Salomat Khakimova, Judge

State Committee on Television and Radio

Said Siddikov, First Deputy Head
Dilafuz Amirkulova, Deputy Head
Tolibjon Kholov, Head of Staff Department

Political Parties

Ziyo Rakhmon, Agrarian Party of Tajikistan
Shodi Shabdolov, MP, Chairperson, Communist Party of Tajikistan
Ismoil Talbakov, MP, Deputy Chairperson, Communist Party of Tajikistan
Saidjafar Ismonov, Chairperson, Democratic Party of Tajikistan
Shamsiddin Jalolov, Deputy Chairperson, Party of Economic Reforms of Tajikistan
Mahmadali Hait, Deputy Chairperson, Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan
Mahmudjan Faizra, Deputy Chairperson, Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan
Asror Latipov, Deputy Chairperson, People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan
Akhmadrafik Khamidov, Head of International Department, People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan
Rakhmon Zode, Head of Legal Department, People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan
Shokirjon Khakimov, Deputy Chairperson, Social-Democratic Party of Tajikistan
Shodavlat Shonusayriev, Deputy Chairperson, Social-Democratic Party of Tajikistan
Dilbar Rasulova, Social-Democratic Party of Tajikistan
Abduhalim Gafforov, Chairperson, Socialist Party of Tajikistan
Munira Saffarova, Socialist Party of Tajikistan

Media

Zebo Tadzibaeva, Executive Director, Information Agency Asia-Plus
Bakhtiyor Khumayron, Journalist, Information Agency Asia-Plus
Khikmatullo Saifullozoda, Chief Editor, Najot newspaper
Josur Abdullaev, Chief Editor, Somon
Sayfiddin Safarmamadov, Ozodagon
Fakhriddin Kholbekov, Radio Liberty
Amriddin Olimov, Radio Liberty

Civil Society

Asomudin Atoev, Association of Internet Service Providers
Alla Kuvatova, NGO Coalition From De Jure to De Facto Equality
Abdugani Mamadazimov, National Association of Political Scientists of Tajikistan

International Community

H.E. Ambassador Markus Mueller, Head of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan
Representatives of diplomatic missions of European Union, Germany, Finland, Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America in Tajikistan