



UNION OF INFORMED CITIZENS

In April this year parliamentary elections were held in Armenia. The Alliance of NGOs formed by us and our partners observed these elections with about 500 long-term and short-term observers.

The observation mission revealed the following:

1. Authorities widely abused the administrative resource. Influence was exerted on voters by employees of schools, kindergartens, official bodies, and businesses belonging to oligarchs. And we succeeded in revealing facts to prove this.

By the way, the ruling party was so dissatisfied with our findings that persecutions were initiated against us instead of those who used public resources for interests of one particular party.

2. Cases of distribution of election bribes were also widespread. However, in all the cases when citizens provided journalists with detailed information about election bribes given or offered to them, they suddenly denied it after visiting the police station.

3. For many years propaganda has convinced citizens in every possible way that the ruling party has no alternative and nothing can be changed with elections. As a result, a considerable part of the Armenian society came to the conclusion that the citizens' only benefit from elections could be the election bribe of 20 euros.

4. The authorities did not take measures to ensure public awareness about the new electoral system. The propaganda turned the elections into a competition of district semi-criminals and oligarchs representing one single party.

Moreover, the authorities were actively obstructing civil society awareness-raising campaigns.

5. During the election day, cases of voting control in voting booths were recorded in 66% of the polling stations. 66 percent. It is a very serious figure.

You can find our report on the table near the entrance.

It is necessary to add that Armenian authorities refused to send invitations to international NGOs to observe the elections, which contradicts their commitments to the OSCE.

In spite of the claims of the representative of Armenia, the OSCE/ODIHR observation mission report contains information on at least 23 serious problems related to Armenian elections.

For example:

- Central electoral commission and law enforcement officials do not properly consider electoral violations reports,
- Public awareness raising efforts of the authorities were not sufficient,
- There were cases of violence during the election campaigns, campaigns were not focused on political platforms and policy.
- Credible information on pressure and intimidation of employees of medical and educational institutions resulted in general decline of public trust in electoral process.
- Electoral violations have made it problematic for citizens to vote freely, which contradicts paragraph 7.7 of OSCE Copenhagen Document.
- Freedom of broadcast media was restricted by owners through intervention in editors' independent decision-making.
- Cases of group voting, as well as attempts to influence voters, and issues related to secrecy of voting were observed in the polling stations.
- It is necessary to add that Armenian authorities refused to send invitations to international NGOs to observe the elections, which contradicts their commitments to the OSCE.

Dear colleagues, if no observers were beaten and no ballot stuffing took place during the elections, it still does not mean that the elections were democratic. In North Korea as well, observers are not beaten and ballot stuffing does not occur.

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