

## **National Forum “Ossetia Accuses”**

### **Report on Electoral Standards in the Republic of South Ossetia**

On the second Sunday of November this year the presidential elections in South Ossetia will take place. They are first after the Georgian aggression in 2008 and first since South Ossetia became recognized by some states – members of the United Nations. Their importance for the country is really enormous. We believe that democratic elections are one of the highest direct expressions of people’s power and also are the foundation of a representative government. As an NGO we are certainly concerned with the transparency and fairness of the coming presidential elections in South Ossetia.

Today the Republic of South Ossetia has an opportunity to implement on its territory the electoral standard according to the traditions and essence of its political culture. There is Copenhagen Document adopted in 1990, which is acknowledged worldwide as one of the main international texts setting principles for elections in the OSCE region. Since 1990 a number of various international institutions contributed to the development of principles related to elections. For example, Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Assembly, Venice Commission, that developed a Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters. Numerous other norms, political commitments, case of law, comments and recommendations are dispersed across a considerable number of documents published in OSCE region. These documents are highly relevant to the political culture of the Republic of South Ossetia, democratic in its core.

Still we believe that taking into consideration the history of South Ossetia, its geographic location, long-time connection with people of neighbor countries the Convention on Standards of Democratic Election, Voting Rights and Freedoms of the Commonwealth of Independent States of 2002 is more applicable today in our state. The Convention is based on common principles and norms of international law related to elections, published in various documents of UN, OSCE and Council of Europe. Why is this Convention more appropriate for South Ossetia? First of all, it gives the state an instrument for democratic development of south-ossetian legal system according to the international regulations. Second, it provides protection from double standards that are unfortunately sometimes used while monitoring elections. Third, the CIS Convention protects the interests of participants of electoral process (national and international observers, representatives of mass media) providing them with a vast range of opportunities

and rights during the elections. And last, the Convention also protects interests of those who hold the elections for their work can be evaluated only using the norms of international law.

As an NGO we shall attentively monitor the fairness, authenticity and transparency of the coming presidential elections in South Ossetia. People of the republic fully recognize that the relevance of elections in the country to international laws, Constitution and laws of South Ossetia is very important for our society. I want to encourage Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights to send its representatives to observe the presidential elections in South Ossetia. It will be helpful for forming its own impartial opinion on the democratic processes taking place in our country. I thank you all for your kind attention.