



ODIHR SPECIAL ELECTION ASSESSMENT MISSION Mongolia – Presidential Election, 9 June 2021

STATEMENT OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The 9 June 2021 presidential election in Mongolia was administered efficiently and transparently, and the election authorities took efforts to inclusively reach out to voters, amid organizational challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Candidates were able to campaign freely, albeit within a highly prescriptive framework, and with an apparent inequality of resources, which underlined the advantages of the ruling party. While the legal framework provides an adequate basis for elections, excessive limitations on the right to stand and overly restrictive regulations on the media remain, and the timelines for elections disputes undermine the right to an effective remedy. The media informed voters about technical aspects of the election, but offered only limited independent information on the candidates beyond paid content provided by contestants, which along with the absence of a public debate impacted the voter's ability to make an informed choice. In the limited number of polling stations visited, the election was well administered and organized.

Background and Political Context

On 20 January 2021, the parliament (State Great Khural) called for the presidential election to be held on 9 June. This eighth presidential election is the first since a constitutional reform in 2019 which reduced presidential powers and provided for a single six-year presidential term. The election follows the 2020 parliamentary and local elections, in which the ruling Mongolian People's Party (MPP) maintained its broad majority in the parliament and control of a majority of provincial and local governments.¹ The election was conducted in a context of increased COVID-19 prevalence, notably in the capital Ulaanbaatar, creating some challenges for the election administration and candidates' campaigns.

Following the merging of MPP and Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP), a reversal of their 2011 separation, MPP designated former prime minister and current party leader Khurelsukh Ukhnaa as the party's candidate. The incumbent president Battulga Khaltmaa, of the opposition Democratic Party (DP), was not eligible to stand for re-election following a decision of the Constitutional Court (CC) on 16 April 2021 which led to the applicability of the new single-term limit to this election.² The DP approached the election amid internal disputes over the party's leadership and a division into two factions, both of which submitted a candidate to the General Election Commission (GEC). On 3 May, the Supreme Court confirmed the validity of Erdene Sodnomzundui's appointment as DP chairperson in 2017, and the GEC subsequently accepted his nomination as a presidential candidate. The Right Person Electorate Coalition (RPEC), having entered the parliament after the 2020 elections, participated for the first time in a presidential election and nominated former parliamentarian Enkhbat Dangaasuren as its candidate.

¹ The MPP obtained 62 seats in the Parliament, the Democratic Party (DP) – 11 seats, the Right Person Electorate Coalition (RPEC), comprising the National Labour Party, the Justice Party and the Mongolian Social Democratic Party – 1 seat, and the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) – 1 seat. One independent candidate was elected, and subsequently joined the DP parliamentary group in April 2021.

² The CC decision concluded that certain provisions of the Law on Presidential Elections (LPE) were not in conformity with the new single term limit in the Constitution. The parliament subsequently issued a resolution accepting the CC decision, which effectively introduced the applicability of the term limit to this election. On 19 April, President Battulga issued a [statement](#) directing the Supreme Court to dissolve the MPP on the basis of "unconstitutional seizure of state power and militarization". The Supreme Court informed the ODIHR SEAM that no administrative or judicial actions were taken on this matter.

Legal Framework and Electoral System

The electoral legal framework is comprehensive and generally adequate for the conduct of democratic elections.³ However, several prior ODIHR recommendations remain unaddressed, despite substantial changes to the legal framework since the previous presidential election.

Constitutional amendments were adopted in November 2019 which reduced, *inter alia*, the tenure of the president to a single six-year term, and which ultimately precluded the incumbent president from standing. Other amendments increased the age requirement for presidential candidates from 45 to 50 years old, introduced a membership quota (1 per cent of the electorate) for political party registration, and prohibited amendments to electoral laws within one year prior to scheduled legislative elections.

In December 2020, the parliament adopted a new Law on Presidential Elections (LPE).⁴ ODIHR SEAM interlocutors generally described the consultation process as inclusive but noted that the law would benefit from additional reform. The revised legal framework partially addressed some prior ODIHR recommendations, such as by broadening opportunities for citizens to verify voter list data and removing certain restrictions on candidate eligibility. Other recommendations remain unaddressed in the legal framework, such as those relating to the exclusion of non-parliamentary parties and independent candidates from candidate nomination, restrictions on suffrage rights on the basis of disability, inconsistencies in dispute resolution timelines, the prohibition on campaigning between two rounds, unclear media regulations, and insufficient oversight of campaign finance.

The president is elected in a single, nationwide constituency by direct suffrage. If no candidate obtains the absolute majority of all votes cast, a second round is held within two weeks between the top two candidates. If neither candidate wins an absolute majority in the second round, a new election is scheduled. This situation could only occur if the number of blank ballots cast, which under the LPE are valid votes, are sufficient to prevent either of the two candidates from reaching an absolute majority. The law also requires an overall turnout threshold of 50 per cent of registered voters for the election to be valid. In case of lower overall turnout, additional polling is conducted in those precincts where turnout was below 50 per cent. ODIHR has previously criticized this threshold due to concerns about equal suffrage, the logistical challenges involved, and the potential to undermine the secrecy of the vote in small communities.

Election Administration

The election was administered by the General Election Commission (GEC) and its subdivisions.⁵ The GEC is a permanent body, comprised of nine members appointed for six-year terms.⁶ Only one member of the GEC is a woman; however, women were well-represented in the lower levels of the election

³ The legal framework comprises, primarily, the 1992 Constitution (last amended in 2019), 2020 Law on Presidential Elections (LPE); 2006 Law on the General Election Commission, 2011 Law on the Automated System of Elections, and 2005 Political Party Law (last amended in 2020). Supplementary legislation includes the 2016 Law on Administrative Procedure, 2017 Criminal Procedure Law, 2017 Law of Offences, 2006 Anti-Corruption Law, and 2016 Law on Human Rights of People with Disabilities.

⁴ In 2018, the parliament began the process of dividing the Election Code into separate laws for regulating presidential, parliamentary and local elections.

⁵ These include 22 Territorial Election Commissions (TECs) for each province (*aimags*) and the capital city, 339 District Election Commissions (DECs) in the capital city districts and rural districts (*soums*), and 2,087 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs). For out-of-country voting, a Central Commission was established within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as 44 branch commissions in diplomatic representations in 30 countries.

⁶ Five members are appointed by the parliament upon the proposal of the Standing Committee on State Structure, two are appointed by the president and two are appointed by the Supreme Court from among civil servants. The chairperson and secretary, who are permanent members of the GEC, are selected by the parliament upon the proposal of its speaker. Other commission members serve part-time.

administration. Lower-level commissions are *ad hoc* bodies and were newly appointed for the election, with members selected from a database of trained and certified civil servants. In line with a prior ODIHR recommendation and to address possible bias within lower-level commissions, the GEC established additional selection criteria, including previous experience, clear record in terms of professional ethics, and number of years in service. The majority of ODIHR SEAM interlocutors generally expressed confidence in the overall professionalism and impartiality of the election administration.

The election administration managed the technical aspects of the electoral preparations in an efficient and professional manner and complied with legal deadlines. The GEC held regular sessions, mostly organised via online conferencing platforms due to pandemic-related restrictions. Most decisions and regulations were published on the GEC website in a timely manner, contributing to the transparency of its work, although sessions were not announced in advance and their agendas were not published. Positively, the GEC actively informed the public about its activities through content on public and private broadcast media, as well as on social networking platforms.

In coordination with the GEC and the State Emergency Commission, the government issued a decree on COVID-19 prevention measures during the electoral period, including on the use of protective equipment, social distancing, requirements for campaign activities and additional arrangements in polling premises and for affected voters. Mobile voting took place on 8 June, one day prior to election day, for 7,051 voters in self-isolation, in quarantine or under treatment in medical facilities, and for 18,568 others eligible for mobile voting.⁷ Voters who tested positive or who were placed in self-isolation or quarantine after the deadline were unable to vote.

Since 2012, all polling stations are equipped with electronic vote-counting equipment (VCE). The new LPE extended the supplementary manual count to all polling stations. The law provides that the results of the VCE are official, but does not address possible instances of discrepancies between the VCE and manual count. To enhance transparency and public understanding of the technologies, the GEC tested the equipment in several stages in the presence of candidate and civil society representatives. These representatives were entitled to conduct independent testing and were invited for an on-screen review of the source code and the system modifications for the presidential election, but were not granted direct access to technical documentation. Despite a prior ODIHR recommendation, an independent verification and certification of the system is not required by law. Although a few political figures questioned the integrity of the system, most ODIHR SEAM interlocutors expressed trust in the use of VCE.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) contributed extensively to the production of voter education and information materials, including for youth and persons with disabilities. In close cooperation with several CSOs, the GEC has made efforts to improve the accessibility of election information, including through adjustable text formatting on its website, Braille or audio versions of printed materials, and the use of subtitles or sign-language interpretation in voter education videos. In addition, the GEC published, in cooperation with the NGO Voter Education Center, a citizen election guide in the Mongolian and Kazakh languages.

Voter Registration

Citizens who are 18 years of age by election day are eligible to vote. Contrary to international obligations and prior ODIHR recommendations, the LPE retains excessive restrictions on voting rights for persons

⁷ Voters could register for mobile voting by 2 and 5 June, depending on the category, if they could not attend polling in-person due to health reasons or due to confinement in healthcare or penitentiary institutions or if they qualified as civil employees on duty on election day.

deprived of legal capacity, including on the basis of intellectual or psychosocial disability, and persons serving a prison sentence, irrespective of the gravity of the crime.⁸

Voter lists were extracted from the National Civil Registration and Information Database, managed by the General Authority for State Registration (GASR), which contains citizens' personal and biometric data.⁹ Voter identities were verified on election day via fingerprint-scanning biometric devices in polling stations. Preliminary voter lists were published on the GASR website on 1 April. Candidates were entitled to receive an electronic copy of aggregated final voter lists no later than three days before election day, whereas citizen observers could only inspect voter lists at individual PECs. Voters could verify their own data and, new to this election, could also verify the records of all persons registered under their address. Verification of registration data could also be performed at the PEC after delivery of voter lists in hard copy by 15 May, with the possibility to request changes until 26 May. Voters could also request a temporary transfer to another polling station, but the transfer could only be requested in-person at the PEC where the voter is registered and subsequently at the new polling station. Due to restrictions on internal movement related to containing COVID-19, this arrangement created challenges for voters away from their place of registration and unable to return, including migrant workers and students, who were potentially unable to vote. A total number of 22,392 voters requested a temporary transfer of their registration. The final voter lists, closed on 5 June, included 2,040,556 voters.

ODIHR SEAM interlocutors did not voice significant concerns over the accuracy or inclusiveness of voter lists. Some pointed to long-standing shortcomings in the national address system and the detection of some dubious records in certain areas, albeit not as a major cause for concern. However, current limitations on access to voter list data precluded possibilities for meaningful independent verification.

Candidate Registration

Prospective candidates must be born to Mongolian parents and reside in Mongolia for at least five years prior to the election. The recent constitutional amendments raised the minimum age for presidential candidates from 45 to 50 years. Prospective candidates must not have outstanding loans, debts or overdue income taxes confirmed by a court decision. The LPE also introduced a prohibition on candidacy for those indicted for corruption or crimes committed in an official capacity, and maintained exclusions on the basis of intellectual or psycho-social disability or who have been deprived of legal capacity by a court decision. In line with prior ODIHR recommendations, provisions restricting candidate eligibility due to a criminal record or lack of military service were repealed in the new law. However, overall, the requirements for eligibility remain overly restrictive and contravene OSCE commitments and international standards.

According to the LPE, parliamentary parties may nominate candidates during a three-day period (30 April to 2 May) which begins 40 days prior to election day, after which the GEC has three days to decide on registration. ODIHR has previously raised concerns that the short period for candidate registration, relatively late in the electoral calendar, could undermine the right to an effective legal remedy in case of rejected nominations (see also Complaints and Appeals). Out of four nominations, the GEC registered

⁸ See paragraph 9.4 of the [2013 CRPD Committee's Communication No. 4/2011](#), which states that "Article 29 does not foresee any reasonable restriction, nor does it allow any exception for any group of persons with disabilities. Therefore, an exclusion of the right to vote on the basis of a perceived or actual psychosocial or intellectual disability, including a restriction pursuant to an individualized assessment, constitutes discrimination on the basis of disability, within the meaning of article 2 of the Convention". See also Articles 12 and 29 of the [2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#).

⁹ For out-of-country voting, interested voters had to actively register with diplomatic missions in the period from 20 April to 9 May. According to the MFA, 7,394 voters registered to vote on 30 and 31 May.

three candidates by 7 May, all of whom are men.¹⁰ Despite prior ODIHR recommendations and contrary to OSCE commitments and international standards on the right to stand, the possibility of nominating candidates is not extended to non-parliamentary parties and independent candidates, which potentially limited voters' choice in the election.¹¹

In order to be registered, prospective candidates are required to submit their policy programmes to the State Audit Office (SAO), which checks for adherence with the country's medium- and long-term development and policy plans. The SAO's conclusions on the candidates' platforms were published on its website prior to the start of the campaign. Although it was not the case in this election, the SAO's conclusions, by law, may lead to the exclusion of a candidate by the GEC. This procedure raises questions of excessive interference with the right to stand and freedom to campaign.¹²

Campaign

The official campaign period took place from 24 May to 7 June. The new LPE shortened the campaign period from 19 to 15 days, which some parties noted limited their capacity, already affected by the pandemic, to reach out to voters. The LPE is highly prescriptive on how candidates may organize their campaigns, listing the permitted activities and prescribing strict rules on the quantities and format of staff, assets and materials. The law prohibits the distribution of money and goods to voters and campaign-related advertising at mass entertainment events. The law also prohibits calls for boycotts, as well as the publication of opinion polls in an election year (prior to election day).

Overall, the electoral campaign was low-key. All candidates could campaign freely without undue interference, but apparent differences in resources were noted. The candidates organized some rallies and public events but generally refrained from direct interaction with voters, prioritizing the use of social media, particularly Facebook. In campaign events observed by the ODIHR SEAM, speakers were accompanied by sign language interpretation, as required by law. The participation of women in the campaign was limited, and proposals appealing to women voters were almost absent in the candidates' platforms. In addition to issues within the presidential mandate, namely foreign policy and judicial matters, all candidates frequently campaigned on policy issues beyond presidential competences, such as the economy, investments, mineral resources, social welfare and pandemic-related measures. Four days prior to the vote, the RPEC candidate, Mr. Enkhbat, announced that he had tested positive for COVID-19 and suspended his campaign activities. The option of casting a blank ballot as a protest vote, a tactic used by some voters in the previous presidential election, became a visible issue in the final days of the campaign, with some opposition figures encouraging the act.

Online campaigning is regulated by the LPE, and its oversight is divided among several regulatory bodies. The law permits candidates to register a maximum of one website and one social media account to be used for campaigning. The purpose of this limit is not clear, and the ODIHR SEAM noted that each candidate was supported by several Facebook pages, some of which also sponsored political ads. The Communications Regulatory Commission (CRC) has an established cooperation with Facebook to

¹⁰ Two factions of the Democratic Party each nominated a separate presidential candidate. The GEC informed the ODIHR SEAM that it did not consider the registration application of Altankhuyag Norov, on the basis of information from the Supreme Court and GASR.

¹¹ Paragraph 15 of the [1996 UN Human Rights Committee's \(CCPR\) General Comment No. 25 on Article 25 of the ICCPR](#) 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". 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 organizations, without discrimination". See also paragraph 24 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document and section II.1.b of the 2002 Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters.

¹² In paragraph 39 of the [2017 CCPR Concluding Observations on Mongolia](#), the committee raised concerns related to the freedom of campaign "due to the power of the National Audit Office to not approve specific campaigning acts".

oversee election-related content on the platform, but the terms of this cooperation and any potential enforcement mechanisms have not been made public.

The ODIHR SEAM noted that the DP and, particularly, MPP campaigns were supported on several occasions by public officials. Some ODIHR SEAM interlocutors expressed concerns related to the misuse of public resources and employees, which amplified the advantages of the ruling party. Some also raised concerns about the alleged continued practice of vote-buying, especially in rural areas. In the months ahead of the election, the government launched several substantial state programmes to provide subsidies and other benefits to different social groups, imparted as responses to the economic and social impact of COVID-19.¹³

Campaign Finance

Although certain improvements have been introduced to the process of submitting campaign finance reports, the overall framework for campaign financing lacks sufficient oversight and transparency and results in limited information for voters about the sources of donations to contestants.

Candidates may finance their campaign through donations from individuals and legal entities (up to MNT 3 million and MNT 15 million, respectively) as well as from the assets of the nominating party, and may self-finance.¹⁴ Foreign and cash donations are prohibited. All party campaign transactions should be conducted through a designated bank account registered with the SAO, which is, as of this election, the primary entity responsible for the oversight of campaign finance. The SAO established expenditure limits for this election, at approximately MNT 8.1 billion per candidate.¹⁵ A provision allowing the transfer of collected funds to the next elections, combined with the high level of permitted expenditure, potentially creates an advantage for more established political parties.

Positively, the SAO introduced an online platform and reporting template through which parties can submit their financial reports. These reports must first be reviewed by a private auditing service chosen by the respective party and are due within 45 days of the election. Despite a prior ODIHR recommendation, parties are not required to submit or disclose interim financial reports, limiting the transparency of campaign financing prior to election day.¹⁶

The SAO does not carry out field monitoring activities during the campaign or use other means of gathering information on candidate activities, although authorized by the LPE to do so. Consequently, it has no means to verify whether all campaign expenses and in-kind donations are included in financial reports. The LPE mandates the SAO to review the audited final reports and to publish the results of its assessment within 60 days. However, the law does not mandate the SAO to publish the financial reports, nor does it specify the level of detail of the assessment, which fails to guarantee sufficient transparency.

Media

The media environment is vibrant, but with some 500 media outlets competing for a limited advertising market, many are not financially viable. Consequently, many outlets remain dependent on owners with

¹³ On 13 April 2020, the parliament approved several anti-epidemic measures which increased allowances per child and unemployment benefits, forgave pensioner loans, exempted taxes on certain imports, and other considerable social welfare benefits. From December 2020 to July 2021, the government also defrayed the utility bills of all citizens and increased the discount rate of refined coal.

¹⁴ One Euro is equivalent to approximately 3,450 Mongolian *Tugrik* (MNT).

¹⁵ Some EUR 2.3 million.

¹⁶ Article 7.3 of the [2003 UN Convention Against Corruption](#) provides that “[e]ach State Party shall also consider taking appropriate legislative and administrative measures... to enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures for elected public office and, where applicable, the funding of political parties”.

political interests, and, according to several ODIHR SEAM interlocutors, often cede editorial services for payment. The high internet penetration contributes to a reliance on social media, particularly Facebook, as a primary source of information, alongside television.

The Constitution guarantees the freedom of expression and further legislation provides a sound framework for the media.¹⁷ While defamation was decriminalized in 2017, provisions prosecuting “false information” and slander, with excessive sanctions, remain or have been recently introduced in different laws.¹⁸ Several ODIHR SEAM interlocutors noted that these provisions contribute to widespread self-censorship among journalists.

The LPE regulates the conduct and coverage of the election campaign on broadcast media and the Internet. The Mongolian National Broadcaster (*MNB*) is required to offer free airtime to candidates, and paid political content is allowed, with a ceiling, on private broadcasters.¹⁹ The LPE limits the daily news coverage of each candidate to five minutes, curbing the editorial freedom of broadcast media. Provisions of the LPE on the use of online media during the election campaign are overly restrictive and ineffective.²⁰ The LPE grants vast sanctioning powers to the CRC, including to suspend online and offline media outlets without judicial review, contrary to international standards.²¹ The oversight of broadcast and online media is divided among several bodies including the GEC, the Authority for Fair Competition and Consumer Protection, and the CRC as the leading regulatory institution. This division of tasks and responsibilities is detrimental to an effective enforcement of the LPE and handling of media-related complaints.²²

According to the CRC, broadcasters generally abided by the rules pertaining to the ceilings for news coverage and paid political content, and the public broadcaster offered free airtime to all candidates. Broadcasters also contributed to voters’ information on technical aspects of the electoral process. However, civil society and media interlocutors underlined a lack of analytical reporting or discussion of candidates’ electoral platforms. Moreover, they noted that broadcast media largely abdicated their role to independently inform the public and frequently aired content produced by parties and candidates during their news programmes, which blurred the line between news and political advertising. Overall, the broadcast media served mainly as a platform for candidates to convey paid political content, and offered limited independent information to voters about electoral programmes. A highly anticipated candidate debate due to take place on *MNB* on the last day of the campaign, was cancelled amid disagreements between contestants about an alternative format following Mr. Enkhbat’s COVID-19 diagnosis.

Complaints and Appeals

The complaints and appeals system offers comprehensive avenues for resolving various types of election-related offenses and for appealing the decisions of administrative bodies, though many timelines remain protracted and inconsistent with electoral deadlines. As noted in previous ODIHR reports and recommendations, the timelines for filing and adjudicating disputes are not aligned to the electoral

¹⁷ The legal framework includes the 2001 Law on Telecommunications, 1998 Law on Media Freedom, 2005 Law on Public Radio and Television, and 2019 Law on Broadcasting.

¹⁸ Including the Criminal Code (Art. 13.4 and 14.8); LPE (Art. 31.4); and the Law on Prevention, Fighting and Mitigating Social and Economic Impact of Covid-19 (Art. 12.3 and 13.3).

¹⁹ Each candidate is entitled to 15 minutes of daily free airtime on *MNB* and up to 15 minutes of daily paid content on private broadcasters.

²⁰ For example, the LPE requires news websites to disable the comments section under election-related news articles, while the same articles were often concurrently posted on Facebook on which comments are allowed.

²¹ See the [2020 Joint Declaration on freedom of expression and elections in the digital age](#) of the UN, OSCE, OAS and ACHPR. See also paragraph 5.10 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.

²² ODIHR previously recommended unifying the oversight of broadcast media under a single independent and accountable body with sufficient resources.

calendar, and could possibly preclude effective legal redress, at odds with OSCE commitments and international standards. For example, for appeals related to candidate registration, the legal timelines for completion of judicial redress via the Administrative Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court extend well beyond the election day and potentially beyond the inauguration of the elected president.

According to the LPE, complaints against decisions of election commissions are handled by higher commissions in a hierarchical manner. Decisions of the GEC can be appealed within seven days to the Administrative Court of Appeals, which must decide within 30 days with a maximum extension of 10 days. This decision can be further appealed within five days to the Supreme Court, which must render a decision within 21 days, with no possibility for extension. The Administrative Court of Appeals received two complaints from prospective DP candidate Althankhuyag Norov, one challenging his rejection as a candidate by the GEC and the other challenging the registration of Mr. Erdene as DP candidate. The Court rejected both complaints, and a pending appeal was submitted to the Supreme Court related to his non-registration.

Procedures for complaints and sanctions on election-related criminal offenses are regulated by the Criminal Code and Law on Offenses. According to the LPE, criminal complaints, included those related to vote-buying, are first handled by a police investigation if minor offenses, whereas serious crimes are transferred to the State Intelligence Agency. On the day prior to the election, the police announced that 41 complaints were received, out of which 19 were resolved and 22 remained pending as of election day.

Citizen and International Observers

The LPE grants significant rights to citizen and international observers, as well as candidates' representatives, which enhanced the transparency of the electoral process. Observers had access to the sessions and activities of election bodies at all levels, could document the voting process with video and audio recordings, and could request VCE result printouts and digital images of the ballots cast. Citizen observers were required to register with individual PECs, and under the new LPE, could designate up to two observers per polling station. While there is no limit to the number of PECs at which observer organizations could register, this decentralized registration process could potentially create an unnecessary hindrance to the national deployment of citizen observers. The GEC accredited 150 citizen observers from three CSOs and 83 international observers. In addition, 4 citizen observers and 14 partisan observers were accredited to observe out-of-country voting.²³

The Civil Society Coalition for Fair Elections conducted long-term observation, including of voter registration, media coverage, campaign finance, VCE, and election day procedures.²⁴ For the first time, the Parent-Teacher Association Mongolia deployed observers, including observers with various types of disability, to assess the accessibility of the electoral process.

Election Day

The ODIHR SEAM did not observe election-day proceedings in a systematic or comprehensive manner. In the limited number of PSs visited, the process was well administered, and organized. The GEC provided regular information on election day developments, which contributed to the transparency of the process, and continuously published disaggregated turnout data on its website based on voter data from biometric registration devices. Citizen observer organizations informed the ODIHR SEAM that they were generally unobstructed in their work. The campaigns generally appeared to respect the silence period, but the ODIHR SEAM received reports of mobilization calls by political parties, challenging

²³ An application submitted by the Right Person Electorate Coalition was rejected due to late submission.

²⁴ The coalition consists of the Open Society Forum, Globe International, Mongolian Center for Investigative Reporters, MIDAS, and Youth Policy Watch.

requirements on voter education neutrality and campaign silence. Following the count, preliminary results data for each province were broadly published in the media based on information from the GEC. The GEC did not publish disaggregated results by polling station, detracting from transparency. The preliminary national turnout was announced at 59.2 per cent.

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

MISSION INFORMATION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ulaanbaatar, 10 June 2021 – The assessment was made to determine whether the election complied with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections and with national legislation.

ODIHR has endorsed the 2005 Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation. This Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions is delivered prior to the completion of the electoral process. The final assessment of the election will depend, in part, on the conduct of the remaining stages of the electoral process, including tabulation and announcement of results, the handling of possible post-election day complaints or appeals. ODIHR will issue a comprehensive final report, including recommendations for potential improvements, some eight weeks after the completion of the electoral process.

Lolita Čigāne is the Head of the ODIHR SEAM, deployed from 21 May. The ODIHR SEAM includes 10 experts in the capital. In line with ODIHR methodology, on election day mission members visited a limited number of polling stations in the city of Ulaanbaatar, but there was no systematic observation of the opening, voting, and counting.

The ODIHR SEAM wishes to thank the authorities for their invitation to observe the election, and the General Election Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their assistance. They also express their appreciation to other state institutions, political parties, candidates, media and civil society organizations, and international community representatives for their co-operation.

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