



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

15 October 2017

OSCE/ODIHR NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION REPORT

24-26 May 2017



Warsaw
14 July 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
III. FINDINGS.....	3
A. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT	3
B. ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK	4
C. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION	5
D. VOTER REGISTRATION.....	6
E. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION	6
F. CAMPAIGN AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE	7
G. MEDIA.....	7
H. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS	8
I. ELECTION OBSERVATION	9
IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	9
ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS	10

**KYRGYZ REPUBLIC
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OSCE/ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report

I. INTRODUCTION

In anticipation of an invitation from the authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic to observe the 2017 presidential election, and in accordance with its mandate, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) undertook a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) to the Kyrgyz Republic from 24 to 26 May. The NAM included Mr. Alexander Shlyk, Head of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Department, Ms. Ana Rusu, OSCE/ODIHR Senior Election Adviser, and Mr. Alexey Gromov, OSCE/ODIHR Election Adviser. The NAM was joined by Ms. Iryna Sabashuk, Head of Administration for Election Observation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

The purpose of the mission was to assess the pre-election environment and the preparations for the election. Based on this assessment, the NAM should recommend whether to deploy an OSCE/ODIHR election-related activity for the forthcoming election, 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 representatives of political parties, media, civil society, and the international community. A list of meetings is annexed to this report.

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

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 15 October the Kyrgyz Republic will hold presidential election. The election will take place in the context of legal changes introduced by the 2016 constitutional referendum and the 2017 amendments to the Constitutional Law on Presidential and *Jogorku Kenesh* (parliamentary) Elections.

The legal framework for the presidential election was last amended in 2015 and 2017 to address several previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, including to establish a centralized voter register, provide more clarity in the electoral dispute resolution system, and introduce mandatory publication of detailed preliminary and official election results. However, many recommendations remain unaddressed, including with regard to restrictions to suffrage rights, broad grounds for deregistration of candidates, lacking guarantees for transparency of campaign finance and undue restrictions on freedom of media. According to most OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors, the legislative process leading to the latest amendments lacked public consultations.

Elections are administered by the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda (CEC), 54 Territorial Election Commissions, and some 2,300 Precinct Election Commissions (PEC). Some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns over transparency in the work of the CEC. While there is overall trust in the impartiality of the lower-level election administration, some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors mentioned the predominant role of representatives of local authorities in some PECs due to lack of nominations from political parties.

The right to vote is granted to citizens who reached 18 years of age by election day, except for those serving a prison sentence or declared incapacitated by a court decision. Voter registration is passive and voter lists are extracted from the Unified Population Register, which includes only those citizens who registered their personal and biometric data. While most stakeholders support biometric identification, noting that this led to significant improvements in the quality of the voter lists, certain concerns were noted over the inclusiveness of the voter registration, as, according to the State Registry Service (SRS), there remain a number of people without biometric registration.

The presidential election can be contested by independent candidates and candidates nominated by political parties. Several prominent candidates already declared their intention to stand for the election. Although the electoral deposit needed to stand was recently increased tenfold, many OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors considered this as a reasonable measure against frivolous candidatures, albeit some noted that it may put women at disadvantage with their male competitors. No concerns were expressed related to the candidate registration procedures.

The election campaign starts 35 days before the election day. The campaign is expected to be intense and focus on democratic development and economic growth, fight against corruption and geopolitical issues. While OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors did not raise issues with the ability to campaign freely, certain concerns were expressed about potential pressure on voters, misuse of administrative resources and vote buying.

Candidates can fund their campaigns from nominating party and their own resources, as well as donations from individuals and legal entities. In 2017, the limits of these contributions were significantly increased, while the overall spending limit for the presidential campaign was removed. Several OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted a lack of transparency related to campaign finance of many parties and a limited effectiveness of CEC oversight.

The Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of expression and media. While media environment is perceived as pluralistic, many OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns over alleged pressure from public officials and business interests on media outlets as challenging the freedom of expression and leading to self-censorship among journalists. Candidates are entitled to free and paid airtime on an equal basis. Authorities are not planning to conduct media monitoring to oversee compliance with legal requirements for unbiased coverage.

Most election-related complaints are considered by election commissions from lower to upper levels. CEC decisions as well as election-related decisions and actions of other government bodies can be appealed in court. Complaints can be filed by all electoral stakeholders, but election results can only be appealed by candidates personally or the observers they nominated. Several OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted a continued lack of confidence in the effectiveness of the redress system.

The law provides for international and citizen observation. Recent legal amendments, limiting the number of observers from citizen groups and candidates to one and two observers per polling station respectively have been widely pointed out by OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors. Despite these limitations, civil society groups plan to observe the elections in large numbers.

All OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors underscored the utility of a large-scale OSCE/ODIHR election observation activity. Their reasoning for this ranged from highlighting the role of international election observation in providing confidence in the process to little follow-up to prior OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, an overall lack of trust in the complaints and appeals process, as

well as increasing threats to and restrictions on media, including online, that may impact the conduct of elections. According to OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors, aspects that would merit specific attention by an OSCE/ODIHR election observation activity include voter and candidate registration, use of new voting technologies, campaign and campaign finance, campaign coverage in the media, and election day procedures.

Based on the findings of this report, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an Election Observation Mission (EOM) for the upcoming presidential election. In addition to a core team of experts, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM recommends the secondment of 24 long-term observers from OSCE participating States to follow the electoral process countrywide, and 350 short-term observers to follow election day proceedings. In line with OSCE/ODIHR's standard methodology, the EOM would include a media monitoring element.

III. FINDINGS

A. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

On 15 October the Kyrgyz Republic will hold presidential election. The date was subject to recent amendments to the Constitutional Law on Presidential and *Jogorku Kenesh* Elections (hereinafter Electoral Law) that advanced the election by one month from the initially planned date of 19 November. This change aimed to ensure that the position does not become vacant between the election of the new president and the expiration of the mandate of the incumbent. This will be the second presidential election since the adoption of the new constitution in 2010. All OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors viewed the upcoming election as an important stepping stone on the country's path of democratic development, in particular in light of the 2016 constitutional amendments.¹

The last parliamentary elections took place in 2015 and resulted in six parties and coalitions entering the parliament: *Ata Meken*, *Bir Bol*, *Respublika-Ata Jurt*, *Kyrgyzstan*, *Onuguu-Progress*, and the *Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan* (SDPK). In November 2016, a new SDPK-led coalition was formed with the participation of *Bir Bol* and *Kyrgyzstan* altogether comprising 68 parliamentary seats. Some parliamentary and non-parliamentary parties stressed their intention to nominate candidates in the presidential race.

Women are generally under-represented in public office, holding 19 out of 120 seats in the current parliament, 3 of the 22 members of the government, and none of the 9 governors.²

The OSCE/ODIHR has previously observed ten elections and referenda in the Kyrgyz Republic.³ The most recent OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission deployed for the 2015 parliamentary elections concluded that the elections "were competitive and provided voters with a wide range of choice, while the manner in which they were administered highlighted the need for better procedures and increased transparency. The elections were characterized by a lively campaign, but the amount of impartial information available to voters in the news was limited. While the use of

¹ Changes to the Constitution were introduced as a result of 11 December 2016 referendum and entered into force in January 2017. The amendments mainly relate to the status of the prime minister and judiciary. See the OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission [Joint Opinion on the Draft Law "On Introduction of Changes and Amendments to the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic"](#).

² A 30 per cent gender quota applies in legislative elections. Recent amendments to the Electoral Law aim to strengthen its implementation. See Paragraph 14 of the CEDAW [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Kyrgyzstan](#) (11 March 2015).

³ See all previous [OSCE/ODIHR reports on Kyrgyzstan](#).

new voting technologies, signalling the political will to improve elections, was in many respects successful, the hurried introduction of biometric registration resulted in significant problems with the inclusiveness of the voter list. This, concerns over ballot secrecy, and significant procedural problems during the vote count were the main issues that tarnished what was a generally smooth election day”.

B. ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The president is elected for a six-year term by direct universal suffrage on the basis of an absolute majority. A candidate who gets more than one half of the votes cast in the first round is considered elected. There are no turnout requirements for the validity of an election. If no candidate receives the required majority, a runoff takes place between the two candidates with the most votes. The law does not specify a date for the second round but stipulates that it should be held not earlier than two weeks after the announcement of the first round results.⁴ Some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors raised concerns about the lack of clarity on a possible date of the second round.

The presidential election is regulated by the 2010 Constitution, the 2011 Constitutional Law on Presidential and *Jogorku Kenesh* (parliamentary) Elections (Electoral Law) and the 2011 Law on Election Commissions to Conduct Elections and Referenda (hereinafter Law on Election Commissions) and subsequent amendments thereof. Other applicable legislation includes the Law on Political Parties, the Law on Demonstrations, provisions of the Code of Administrative Procedures and Criminal Code, as well as regulations of the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda (CEC). The Kyrgyz Republic is a party to major international instruments related to the holding of democratic elections.⁵

The Electoral Law will apply for the first time to the presidential election. Significant amendments were introduced in 2015 following an inclusive process and provided for biometric voter registration and a centralized voter register, more clarity in the electoral dispute resolution system, and the use of ballot scanners.⁶ In 2017, in addition to advancing the date of the election, changes included an increase of the electoral deposit for candidate registration, optimisation of the work with voter lists, abolition of spending limits for campaign, new regulations on campaign coverage online, as well as limitations to the status of citizen observers.⁷ Many OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concern that legislative changes introduced in 2017 were done in a hasty manner and without prior consultation with state institutions and civil society.

Recent changes to other legislative acts provide for increased sanctions for vote-buying and violation of campaign finance rules and amend the complaints and appeals procedures. Meanwhile, a number of previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations remain unaddressed, including with regard to disproportional limitations of active and passive suffrage rights, broad grounds for the

⁴ According to the Electoral Law, the CEC establishes the election results in the first round within 20 days after the election day. In case of a judicial challenge, the establishment of the results is suspended until the court decision.

⁵ Including the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 2003 UN Convention against Corruption, and 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

⁶ See previous OSCE/ODIHR reports and [the 2014 OSCE/ODIHR and Council of Europe’s Venice Commission Joint Opinion on the Draft Electoral Law of the Kyrgyz Republic](#).

⁷ Section II.2.b of the 2002 Council of Europe’s Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters recommends that “the fundamental elements of electoral law...should not be open to amendment less than one year before an election”.

deregistration of candidates, lack of guarantees for campaign finance transparency and undue restrictions on freedom of media.

C. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The election is administered by a three-level structure comprising the CEC, 54 Territorial Election Commissions (TECs) and some 2,300 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs). Out-of-country voting is to be conducted at some 35 polling stations established at embassies and consulates.

The CEC is a permanent body consisting of 12 members, with the president, the parliamentary majority, and the parliamentary opposition each nominating 4 members. Its current composition was elected by the parliament in June 2016 for a five-year term. Five CEC members, including the chairperson and a deputy chairperson, are women.⁸ After their registration, candidates are entitled to each nominate a non-voting representative to the CEC and lower-level commissions.

The CEC is responsible for the administration of elections, including appointing TECs, registering candidates, establishing polling stations, campaign finance oversight and reviewing complaints against decisions of lower-level commissions. Preparations for the upcoming election are ongoing with the CEC leading several donor-funded projects aimed at increasing the efficiency of the election administration, improving accessibility of polling stations for persons with disabilities, training of lower-level commissions and the use of new voting technologies. In addition, the CEC plans activities to raise public confidence in the electoral process, including information on voting procedures, voter education against vote-buying and raising awareness of persons with disabilities and young voters. Some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors criticized the CEC for the lack of transparency, specifically noting lack of timely information about upcoming CEC sessions and scarce communication with media and NGOs with regards to its activities.

The TECs and PECs were formed throughout 2016 and 2017 for two-year terms. The TECs are formed by the CEC with no less than 11 members, and the PECs are formed by the TECs with no less than 7 members. Each TEC and PEC should comprise one half of members nominated by political parties and one half nominated by local self-government bodies. Each political party can nominate only one member per commission. Although the majority of OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors did not question the impartiality of the lower-level election administration, some expressed concerns over the predominant role of representatives of local government authorities in the PECs due to lack of nominations from political parties. In line with a previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendation, the Law on Election Commissions was amended in 2017 to provide for the remuneration of all election officials engaged in the electoral process.

As for the most recent elections, automatic ballot scanners attached to ballot boxes will be used for nationwide counting.⁹ The law provides for scanners to count ballots and to report election results after the close of the polls. Nevertheless, only the results of the subsequent manual count are legally binding. All OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors supported the use of new technologies and many considered subsequent manual count of votes as an effective safeguard against fraud or falsification of election results.

⁸ The Law on Election Commissions provides for a gender quota of 30 per cent in the CEC composition.

⁹ The new technology was previously applied nationwide in the 2015 parliamentary elections and 2016 constitutional referendum, as well as in several local elections.

D. VOTER REGISTRATION

The right to vote is granted to citizens who have reached 18 years of age by election day. Despite previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, citizens serving a prison sentence, irrespective of the severity of the crime committed, and those who are declared incapacitated by a court decision have no right to vote. Voter registration is passive and voter lists are extracted from the Unified Population Register (UPR), managed by the State Registry Service (SRS). The UPR includes citizens based on their personal and biometric data (photo and fingerprints), which are used for voter identification on election day.¹⁰

While none of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM's interlocutors expressed concerns over the data quality of the voter lists, many criticized the lack of inclusiveness of the voter registration system. According to the SRS, there are some 3,600,000 valid passports in the country, but only some 3 million citizens have passed biometric registration, of whom some 2,857,000 are included in voter lists. Many OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors assumed that the majority of voters without biometric registration are working abroad and are not interested to register; however, there are also people living in the country that are not registered, thus being unable to vote.¹¹ While acknowledging easy access to biometric registration, some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that more outreach efforts could have been made by the authorities between elections to encourage people to register their biometric data.

No later than 70 days before election day, the SRS should compile preliminary voter lists and submit them electronically to the CEC broken down to the polling station level. The PECs post the preliminary lists for public scrutiny 60 days before election day. Starting from this period and until 15 days before the election, voters can confirm their data at PECs or online and request corrections of any mistakes. During this time, voters may also request to vote at the place of their temporary residence (electoral address), or, in case of omission, register their biometric data with the local authorities for further inclusion on the voter list. Voters may not be added to the voter lists on election day.

E. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Any citizen between the age of 35 and 70, who has resided in the country for more than 15 years in total and speaks the state language, can stand for presidential election.¹² Candidates may be nominated by political parties or can stand independently. The 2017 amendments to the Electoral Law increased tenfold the electoral deposit for registration of candidates.¹³ Many OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors regarded such an increase as a reasonable measure against frivolous candidates, albeit some noted that it may put women at disadvantage with their male competitors since they have less access to funding for political campaigns.

¹⁰ The UPR contains compiled and crosschecked information from four components: civil status registry, address register, passport registry, and biometric data registry.

¹¹ Some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors opined that a considerable number of citizens avoid biometric registration due to the lack of confidence in efficient management and protection of private data.

¹² As previously noted by the OSCE/ODIHR, the law does not state clear and objective criteria for determining language proficiency of candidates. The 2017 legal amendments specify that a prospective candidate should provide the CEC with a language proficiency certificate.

¹³ The deposit is KGZ 1 million (some EUR 13,700). EUR 1 is approximately KGZ 73 (Kyrgyz *Som*). The deposit is returned to candidates who receive five or more per cent of all votes cast.

Candidate nomination should be supported by at least 30,000 signatures, which are subject to verification either partially or in full. The legal framework contains broad criteria for determining the validity of supporting signatures and does not provide details on verification procedures. Despite previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, broad grounds are also provided for the de-registration of candidates, including for violating campaign finance regulations and campaign rules or when election fraud is committed by candidates or their representatives. Nevertheless, none of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns over the candidate registration process.

F. CAMPAIGN AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE

The official electoral campaign period starts 35 days and ends 24 hours before the election day. The campaign is expected to focus on issues related to democratic developments and economic growth, fight against corruption and geopolitical issues. Parties plan to conduct their campaigns using billboards, rallies, traditional media and online. While parties did not contest the ability to campaign freely, including in minority languages, many OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors anticipate potential pressure on voters, misuse of administrative resources and vote-buying practices.

There is no direct public financing of campaigns. The 2017 amendments to the Electoral Law removed campaign spending limits for presidential campaign and significantly increased the amounts of permissible donations. Candidates can fund their campaigns from nominating party and their own resources, as well as donations from individuals and legal entities.¹⁴ Contributions from foreign, state-owned or anonymous sources, religious and charitable organizations, as well as cash and in-kind donations are prohibited. All campaign funds must be channelled through candidates' designated bank accounts.

Control over campaign finance is vested with the CEC audit group. Candidates are required to submit financial reports to the CEC, although the law does not specify any deadlines. Banks should regularly provide information to the CEC on campaign income and expenditures, which the CEC plans to regularly post on its website. Many OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors pointed out the lack of efficient sanctions for potential campaign finance violations, which could result in candidates circumventing the rules and thus limiting the transparency of campaign finance.

G. MEDIA

Media is diverse and includes a range of public and private television (TV) and radio stations, print media outlets and online media. There are five public and private nationwide TV stations with Public TV and Radio Company (KTRK) playing a leading role in terms of coverage and number of viewers. While print media is losing ground and remains limited to urban centres and the importance of online media is growing, television remains the main source of information for most people. OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors did not raise major issues about the functioning of media; however, many pointed out that the limited advertising market impedes the editorial independence and pluralism of media.

The Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of expression and media. Further regulations for the campaign period are enshrined in the Electoral Law, which provides for the principle of equality of candidates in terms of access to media but prohibits the disclosure of biased and false information. There is a ban on campaigning through foreign media and, for the duration of the campaign, foreign media cannot broadcast live. All broadcast media that are partially or fully

¹⁴ Individuals and legal entities can each donate up to KGS 50 million, and a candidate can use up to KGS 15 million of own funds and up to KGS 50 million from the nominating party.

financed from state or local budgets are obliged to provide equal opportunities for candidates allocating at least one hour of free air time on working days shared equally among all candidates; at least one-third of free airtime provided by state-funded broadcasters should be used for debates.¹⁵ Each candidate is entitled to receive at least one A4 page of free-of-charge advertising in state-funded newspapers. Additionally, candidates can purchase air time on public and private channels, as well as space in print media.¹⁶ OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors recognised that some candidates might have a distinct advantage in treatment by public and private media due to their positions in the government or to connections with media owners. Equally, relatively high fees for paid political advertisement may preclude some candidates from additional access to TV channels.

To be able to cover election-related activities and to publish paid political advertisement, media, including those operating online, must be accredited by the CEC, potentially limiting the information available to voters, as previously noted by the OSCE/ODIHR.¹⁷ Some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors mentioned that the possibility for the CEC to withdraw such an accreditation leaves room for arbitrary decisions against certain media outlets. No official or systematic media monitoring of the campaign coverage is envisaged.

While defamation and insult are decriminalized, many OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted a worrying recent trend of an increasing number of lawsuits from government officials against journalists and media outlets, as potentially an instrument of pressure on independent media leading to self-censorship among journalists.¹⁸

H. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Decisions and actions of election commissions and their officials can be appealed with the superior election commissions, while decisions and actions of the CEC and other institutions, as well as violations of electoral rights of citizens, can be appealed to inter-district courts on administrative matters and then further to the administrative chamber of the Supreme Court whose decision is final.¹⁹ Some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors anticipate that the requirement for citizens to travel to Bishkek to lodge an appeal against election commissions may cause additional costs and discourage many from pursuing judicial redress.

Complaints against lower level commissions and other electoral subjects have to be submitted within two days from the time when the complainant became aware of the infringing action. Judicial appeals and appeals of election results should be lodged within three days after the issuance of a decision and the publication of election results, respectively. Law enforcement bodies are also entitled to hear complaints from citizens regarding offences that may be subject to administrative and criminal liability. The length of the review process at every stage is three days, except for election day complaints that are examined immediately. Appeals to the Supreme Court are heard within maximum five days.²⁰

¹⁵ KTRK plans to organise public debates, which are seen as an important tool for the shaping of public opinion.

¹⁶ Prices for paid advertisement should be published in advance and apply equally to all candidates.

¹⁷ The 2017 amendments to the Electoral Law introduced the accreditation requirements for broadcast and printed media as well as for websites with more than 1,000 unique monthly visitors (notably, blogs and personal pages in social networks are excluded), which contain news and analytical materials and are either moderated from the Kyrgyz Republic or owned by Kyrgyz citizens or legal entities.

¹⁸ At least six cases were reportedly initiated by state officials in 2017 seeking a total of some KGS 60 million in damages.

¹⁹ This structure of the appeal system will be in place as of 1 July 2017, in line with the newly adopted judicial reform package.

²⁰ The Supreme Court informed the OSCE/ODIHR NAM about ongoing training of judges with regard to the amended legislation and adjudication of election-related cases.

Many OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors emphasised conflicting norms about adjudication of some of electoral disputes, insufficient awareness of citizens and lacking public information. Several OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted a lack confidence in the effectiveness of the legal remedy system due to an excessively formalistic approach from law enforcement bodies to hearing the complaints and a perceived lack of judicial independence.²¹

I. ELECTION OBSERVATION

The Electoral Law provides for candidates' and citizen observers as well as for international observation of all stages of the electoral process. To avoid conflicts of interest, the law prohibits certain persons, such as MPs, central and local government officials, members of the election administration, judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement agents, to enrol as observers.

According to recent amendments to the Electoral Law, citizen groups and candidates are now limited to only one and two observers per polling station, respectively. Moreover, the amendments limit the right of candidate representatives to appeal election results. Many OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors interpreted these legal changes as a way to diminish the role of citizen observation. Several citizen observer groups plan to observe the upcoming presidential election focusing primarily on media monitoring, including on the Internet, women's participation, potential misuse of administrative resources and vote-buying as well as election day procedures. Candidates are also expected to mobilize observers at polling stations throughout the country.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

All OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors underscored the utility of a full-fledged OSCE/ODIHR election observation activity. Their reasoning for this ranged from highlighting the role of international election observation in providing confidence in the process to little follow-up to prior OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, an overall lack of trust in the complaints and appeals process, increasing threats and restrictions to media, including online, that may impact the conduct of elections. According to OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors, aspects that would merit specific attention by an OSCE/ODIHR election observation activity include voter and candidate registration, use of new voting technologies, campaign and campaign finance, campaign coverage in the media, and election day procedures.

Based on the findings of this report, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an Election Observation Mission (EOM) for the upcoming presidential election. In addition to a core team of experts, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM recommends the secondment of 24 long-term observers from OSCE participating States to follow the electoral process countrywide, and 350 short-term observers to follow election day proceedings. In line with OSCE/ODIHR's standard methodology, the EOM would include a media monitoring element.

²¹ In its [second Universal Periodic Review](#) (January 2015), the CCPR recommended that the Kyrgyz Republic pursue judicial reforms to ensure an independent and impartial judiciary, including the establishment of objective criteria for selecting and dismissing judges.

ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Almash Altymysheva, First Secretary, Department of International Organizations and Security

Ministry of Internal Affairs

Kamal Nadyrov, Deputy Head, General Directorate of Public Security

Taalaipek Alizhanov, Chief Inspector, General Directorate of Public Security

Kanatbek Dosov, Inspector, General Directorate of Public Security

Saltanat Murzabekova, Inspector, Department of Legal Support and International Cooperation

Eshimkan uulu Nurdin, Senior Investigator, General Directorate of Investigations

Parliamentary Committee of Constitutional Legislation, State Structure, and Judiciary Issues

Asel Koduranova, MP, Head

Aida Mambetova, Deputy Head, Department of Constitutional Legislation

Shabdan Alishev, Deputy Head of Section, Department of Constitutional Legislation

Kamila kyzy Beishenbek, Deputy Head of Section, Department of Constitutional Legislation

Ernist Abdyrashitov, Deputy Head, Department of International Co-Operation

Presidential Administration

Anarbek Ismailov, Head, Legal Department

Manas Sarymsakov, Deputy Head, Legal Department

Nurlan Jumaliev, Expert, Department of External Policy

Central Commission for Elections and Referenda

Nurzhan Shaildabekova, Chairperson

Atyr Abdrakhmatova, Vice-Chairperson

Abdyjapar Bekmatov, Vice-Chairperson

Gulnara Djurabaeva, Member

Akylbek Eshimov, Member

Kairat Osmonaliev, Member

Kunduz Rysbek kyzy, Head, Department of International Cooperation

Supreme Court

Feruza Dzhamasheva, Deputy Chairperson

Satarbek uulu Mirbek, Head, Department of Civil Cases

Zarina Kalieva, Specialist, International Department

Ainura Toktosheva, Press Secretary

State Registration Service

Dastan Dogoev, Deputy Chairperson

Nazik Shatmanova, Head, International Cooperation Department

Political Parties²²

Temir Sariiev, Leader, *Ak-Shumkar*

Almambet Shykmamatov, MP, Parliamentary Fraction *Ata Meken*

Isa Omurkulov, MP, Leader of Faction, Social-Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan

Kylychbek Omorov, Consultant, Social-Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan

²² OSCE/ODIHR NAM requested meetings with representatives of all parliamentary factions.

Media

Zarema Kolkombaeva, Head, Department of External Relations, Public Broadcasting Corporation
Roza Tashtanalieva, Specialist, Department of External Relations, Public Broadcasting Corporation
Bakyt Asanov, Correspondent, Radio “Azatyk”
Gulnura Toralieva, Correspondent, AKI-press
Jamilya Samsakova, Media Expert

Civil Society

Ainura Osmonalieva, Deputy Head, Legal Clinic “Adilet”
Bektur Osmonbaev, Deputy Head, Legal Clinic “Adilet”
Nurgul Abdukarimova, Expert, Public Fund “Centre of Media Development”
Erkin Mamasaliev, Executive Director, Public Fund “Civil initiative of Internet Policy”
Timur Baltabaev, Co-ordinator, Public Fund “Civil initiative of Internet Policy”
Edir Bova, Co-ordinator, Public Fund “Civic Platform”
Cholpon Omurkanova, Head, Public Fund “Eagle”
Cholpon Abjaparova, Legal Expert, Public Fund “Eagle”
Dinara Oshurakhunova, Head, Coalition “For Democracy and Civil Society”
Tagir Osmonaliev, Executive Director, Association “Taza Shailoo”

International Community

Valeriu Chiveri, Deputy Head, OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek
Representatives of Embassies and International Organizations