



Transparency International Georgia Releases Second Interim Report on Pre-Election Monitoring

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Tbilisi, Georgia – Transparency International Georgia today published the second interim report on monitoring the misuse of administrative resources for election campaign. The report covers the period of time between 15 March and 5 May 2010 and focuses on the four main types of misuse of administrative resources: coercive, financial, material-technical and human.

The information included in the report was provided by Transparency International Georgia's regional coordinators and other regional contacts, journalists, civil society representatives, public officers and party activists. Every case was verified with several sources.

The analysis shows that there have been, to-date, fewer violations during the campaign for 30 May local elections than was the case during the 2008 early presidential and parliamentary elections. However, the general picture is still far from positive.

Coercive Resources

Instances of **pressure on voters and opposition activists** represent the most alarming issue. These types of incidents are more common in the regions. Specifically, opposition party candidates have been forced to withdraw from the elections, public officers have been required to attend ruling party campaign events, all the while campaign activities of opposition parties have been obstructed.

On 3 May, the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti governor, the Military Police chief, a high-ranking officer from the Kodori police department, the Mestia majoritarian MP, the head of Mestia administration, the Financial Police regional chief and other representatives of the authorities, accompanied by a special unit of the police (approximately 40-50 people), summoned the Freedom Party's candidates (both majoritarian and those from the party list) to the administration building between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m. and forced them to withdraw from the elections. All five individuals who were summoned officially withdrew from the race that night.

In the district of Qvareli, following pressure from the head of district administration and the chief of police, the candidates from the National Council seeking membership in the Akhalsopeli and Mtsidziri city councils also pulled out of the race.



Shota Kavtarashvili, head of the Akhmeta district chapter for the Movement for Fair Georgia, was instructed by the council deputy chairman and the district administration's representative in Duisi village to forgo political activities and leave the "Noghaideli Party". They visited Kavtarashvili at home and threatened him for 30 minutes. As a result Kavtarashvili required urgent medical attention.

In the village of Kviani, district of Lanchkhuti, and Alvani, district of Qvareli, 12th-graders who are eligible to vote have been warned that they will be drafted into the army before being admitted to universities if they fail to vote for the ruling party.

In Ozurgeti, buses and minibuses were not allowed to travel to and from villages when the National Council leaders visited the district on 24 March.

Cases of various kinds of pressure on members of opposition parties and voters, including bribing, were recorded in a number of places (Sabatlo village – Dedoplistskaro District, Akhmeta, Qvareli, Ozurgeti and villages of Ozurgeti municipality, the village of Akhalkalaki – Kaspi District, Mestia and Tbilisi).

Financial Resources

Issues of concern within the area of financial resources include the increase in the number of staff and salaries in Tbilisi and in the district councils and administrative bodies, allocation of funding for certain (non-seasonal) activities exclusively before the elections and an increase in the subsidies allocated to local media entities from municipal budgets.

There was an increase in the number of staff and salaries in 13 of the 43 municipalities reviewed by Transparency International Georgia. Also, while there was no increase in the number of staff in nine municipalities, salary allocations did increase. In Gori, Rustavi, Khobi, Signaghi, Gurjaani, Telavi, Lagodekhi and Akhmeta, various types of activities related to sports, culture, education and social policy were funded exclusively prior to the elections. Media subsidies increased in Oni, Abasha, Martvili, Telavi, Gurjaani, Signaghi, Qvareli and Akhmeta.

Material-technical and Human Resources

TI Georgia has recorded violations involving material-technical and human resources in Tbilisi, Telavi, Gurjaani, Sagarejo, Batumi and a few other districts.

In the Qarajala village of the district of Telavi, the head of administration confiscated the identification cards of 50-60 people under the pretext of "humanitarian aid distribution". In Batumi, the 2nd Division of the City Police Department sent a letter to the heads of different state



agencies and private organizations requesting personal ID numbers and other personal data of their employees.

Prisoners' families in the district of Ozurgeti were requested by local public officials from Gamgeoba to gather signatures of 100 to 500 supporters for the Unified National Movement in exchange for prisoners' release.

In Gurjaani, the functions of the city administrative offices and the United National Movement are closely intertwined; so much so, that citizens requesting public assistance have been turn away from the public office to the offices of the United National Movement's offices due to the fact that so many public employees are spending their vacation time assisting the United National Movement Party.

In Tbilisi, the use of the "I Love Tbilisi" logo (created as part of the so-called Tbilisi re-branding campaign sponsored by the Tbilisi Mayor's Office) in the ruling party's election campaign is particularly common. The Mayor's Office has said that it does not own the copyrights for this logo and anyone can use it. However, since the "I Love Tbilisi" logo was used during the presentation of the Mayor's Office projects, it is associated with the Mayor's Office. The document adopted at the 1990 Copenhagen Conference states that there must be a clear distinction between the state and political parties.

Inter-agency Task Force (IATF)

On 8 May, the Inter-agency Group met four observer organizations – New Generation-New Initiative, Transparency International Georgia, the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy and the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association – to receive information about the violations they had recorded. The members of the Group took note of violations and promised to react immediately. Transparency International Georgia will continue to collaborate with the Inter-agency Group and will inform the public about the Group's efforts toward the elimination of irregularities.

"It is important to inform the public about the measures taken against the offenders. This needs to be done in order to strengthen the voters' trust in the system and prevent similar violations. If those who break the law are punished adequately today and the information about this is disseminated widely, others will refrain from committing violations in the future," noted Nina Khatiskatsi, program director at Transparency International Georgia.

Future Activities

"Transparency International Georgia" continues to monitor the pre-election activities and will present its findings to the public on two more occasions prior to the actual elections. After the elections, the TI Georgia will publish a final report containing a summary of all violations and



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problems recorded during the monitoring process and offer recommendations for their prevention in the future.

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