

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL GEORGIA RELEASES A NEW MONITORING REPORT ON THE MISUSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES AHEAD OF 2013 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

24 October 2013, Tbilisi - As a result of the 2012 parliamentary elections, the Georgian government changed for the first time through the electoral process, marking a very important event for the country's development. Great attention should be paid to limiting the misuse of administrative resources in the pre-election period. We present an interim report which covers monitoring from July 1 2013 to 23 October. Our monitoring has revealed that compared to the 2012 parliamentary elections, there were far less instances of the misuse of administrative resources for electoral purposes in the period analyzed in this report. This has made the election environment seem more peaceful and competitive.

1. Coercive resources

We did not observe any large-scale cases of using coercive resources during the reporting period. This means that the state, as a rule, was not using resources available to them in order to intimidate, threaten, arrest, dismiss etc. people due to their political affiliation. However, several instances must be singled out.

- At 6AM on October 20th, the Head of the Kharagauli regional division of the police Davit Kapanadze, together with ten other policemen, searched Nino Pkhaladze's house. Pkhaladze is a staff member of Davit Bakradze's Kharagauli regional campaign office, the head of the Partskhnali village's campaign office, and a member of the Kharagauli Municipal Hall. Allegedly, they possessed operative information about arms and explosives in the house, however, the police found no such arms in the house.
- Officials in several municipality governments have reported intimidation and pressure against them. This concerns the Bolnisi and Akhmeta municipal halls, the heads of which were fired as a result. These specific facts may not be in direct relation to the presidential elections, however, it is important to avoid such instances to ensure a competitive and fair environment for the elections.

2. Legislative resources

- We claim that legislative resources were misused when the Central Election Commission declined Salome Zourabichvili's request to register as a presidential candidate with no reasonable grounds, and when President Saakashvili issued two orders as a result of which many inmates were pardoned and thousands of people were granted Georgian citizenship, respectively.
- The fact that the Minister of Education allowed for secondary enrollments (after the applicants failed to get seats in the universities of their first preference) might be considered a misuse of the resources in this category.

3. Institutional resources

Compared to other types of resources, institutional resources were misused for electoral purposes most frequently during the 2013 campaign.

- Civil servants violated the law by participating in the pre-election rallies in Zugdidi, Poti and Chokhatauri.
- Compared to the 2012 parliamentary elections, the current campaign was marked with less cases of mobilizing civil servants for campaigning. In several municipalities where such events took place, we observed that the activities were more voluntary than compulsory/coercive. We referred these facts to the Central Election Commission (CEC), however, the CEC did not satisfy most of our claims without any good reasons.

4. Financial resources

- There were almost no instances of the misuse of state financial resources during the 2013 presidential campaign. We observed one instance in Ajara where the funding for specific programs of the local budget was increased after July 1. This constituted a violation of the law, as increasing the funding of any program is not permitted in the pre-election period. The law was later amended to stipulate that the state budget programs may not be increased in the two years before elections, and not during the pre-election period.

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