

OSCE/ODIHR opens Georgian Local Self-Government Election Observation Mission



► Head of OSCE/ODIHR EOM thinks that 30 long-term and 350 short-term observers will meet the need for the upcoming October elections.

a media monitoring component that generates quantitative, and qualitative evaluations of campaign media coverage. We ensure impartiality and consistency in our evaluation process, even when we return to the same country we observed last time." Johnson added.

He spoke of the clear criteria for this assessment, which include the OSCE commitments, international standards, and commitments related to democratic elections and national legislation. ODIHR's previous recommendations in Georgia and the status of their implementation are also taken into account.

According to him, the observation mission is not interested in the election results, but in the election process itself.

"Our role is only to observe and our observations and evaluations will be published in our future reports," Johnson said.

As he informed me, the mission will publish an interim report 2 weeks before election day, which will be an actual description of the election process. A press conference will be held after election day, where a statement of initial findings and conclusions will be published. The final report will be published 8 weeks after the election process is completed and this report will provide recommendations that should be taken into account by the authorities. The recommendations will indicate the specific methods through which ODIHR wants to work with the government and assist it to ensure that, if necessary, the procedures are in line with the country's OSCE commitments.

According to Johnson, the pandemic certainly poses challenges to observation activities, although ODIHR will fulfill its mandate meticulously.

The Monitoring Mission also undertakes to strictly adhere to the national health protocols introduced in the country and to follow standard operating procedures related to the Covid Pandemic.

Giorgi Kalandarishvili, Chairman of the CEC, says that the involvement of observers in the election process is important. According to him, they want as many local and international observers as possible to be present at the elections.

"We welcome and are pleased that despite the pandemic, the OSCE / ODIHR has been able to carry out its mission. They will be represented by 30 long-term and 350 short-term observers. Other international organizations are also registered to evaluate the elections. Registrations of local observer organizations are carried out daily. I have high hopes that involvement in the processes and findings will be provided as much as possible," Kalandarishvili said, adding that the CEC has invited election commissions from different countries.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Observers from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) held a press conference on the opening of the observation mission to the local elections in Georgia on the 26th of August.

Albert Johnson, Head of the OSCE/ODIHR EOM said that their main mission is to monitor elections and state institutions to ensure that election procedures are properly executed.

ODIHR had previously deployed 16 observers, including those involved in the 2020 parliamentary elections. An introductory meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Central Election Commission has already been held where they were introduced with the team and were explained the details of the mission's activities. Johnson thanked the MFA and the CEC for their cooperation.

The main team of this monitoring mission consists of 12 international experts, 10 are already participating in the states. These are election, political, media analysts. In addition, technical and logistical experts are involved in this mission, the core group is based in Tbilisi, where the mission's temporary office will be for the next 7 weeks. 30 long-term observers are supposed to arrive on September 2nd.

Long-term observers will be deployed to 15 locations across the country to monitor election processes at the regional level.

As the head of the mission says, they have requested 350 short-term observers, whose role would be to systematically monitor voting and counting procedures throughout the country.

"An important aspect is that we are observing the elections per the observation methodology established by ODIHR, which has already been revised. This methodology has a 20-year history and 57 states have participated. We will have an administrative process before

the election day, we will also monitor the campaign activities, as well as the campaign financing, media environment, and media coverage, as well as the legal framework, the issue of dispute resolutions," he announced.

Accordingly, several meetings will be held with the election administration, key institutions and organizations, political parties, civil society, as well as media representatives, both on national and regional levels. "Our mission is to include



► The chairman of the Central Election Commission welcomed that despite the pandemic, the OSCE / ODIHR has been able to carry out its mission.

EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 3.1288 | EURO - 3.6842 | GBP - 4.3002 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.2270 | SWISS FRANC - 3.4168 |

Garibashvili talks about Giorgi Gakharia while presenting Mayoral Candidate in Martvili

TORNIKE JANASHIA WAS PRESENTED AS THE MAYORAL CANDIDATE



► The Prime Minister called Gakharia's decision to leave the party a betrayal



► Garibashvili also talked about the Covid-19 situation in the country, saying that the economy can't survive another lockdown.

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

Georgian Dream representatives, including the Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Garibashvili visited Martvili to present the Mayoral Candidate of the Georgian Dream. Tornike Janashia was presented as the candidate yesterday.

While talking with reporters, Irakli Garibashvili talked about the former Prime Minister of Georgia, Giorgi Gakharia, saying that he betrayed his party. "Of course, in my eyes, Gakharia is a true traitor. He is more than that, he is a very rare traitor," said the Prime Minister.

Garibashvili also claims that former Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia did not run in the 2012 elections at all, he came from Moscow and then „hit the government on the recommendation of one of the people.“ He also noted that Gakharia made many mistakes during his rule, for which the Georgian Dream paid a high political price.

He was asked by the reporters which mistakes he was talking about. The Prime Minister responded that he meant quite a few of them.

"Too many, for example, the failed club operations, then the Pankisi operation failed as well, then Gavrilov's night wrong management, and so on. For all of these, the Georgian Dream paid a very high political price, and all this was done at our expense and the expense of our citizens," said Garibashvili.

The Prime Minister called Gakharia's decision to leave the

party a betrayal of the state and the team. He said that even though the whole team stood by the ex-premier, he decided to leave the country at a critical time.

"Perhaps there is no such fact in the history of the world when a high-ranking official, the Prime Minister, resigned only because he did not agree to arrest someone, while the previous day and in the previous hours he insisted

on his arrest," added Prime Minister Garibashvili.

The Prime Minister of Georgia also talked about the coronavirus pandemic in the country and once again said that there are not talks about the lockdown and other extreme restrictive measures, as the country's economy can't survive that.

The Prime Minister said that the country already has enough

jabs to vaccinate a huge part of the population, which can help slow down the spread of the virus.

Garibashvili expects that the high rate of mortality and infection caused by the coronavirus pandemic will be stabilized in October. He supports this assumption with vaccination and the immunity that citizens developed by already contracting and recovering the virus.

NEWS IN BRIEF

PREPARED BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

Salome Samadashvili: Our partners will demand fulfillment of obligations from the Georgian Dream

"The commitments made by the Georgian Dream remain in force, no matter how many times they declare that they are unilaterally withdrawing from this agreement - The position of our partners is that they will demand fulfillment of obligations from the Georgian Dream and it doesn't need negotiations, - Salome Samadashvili, a member of the United National Movement, told journalists.

"The decision of the Georgian Dream to unilaterally cancel the agreement threatens our country's strategic relations with the European Union and beyond. This decision also threatens the assistance that is vital to our country and to every citizen. The Georgian Dream has led the situation to the point that today our partners are forced to discuss the suspension of financial assistance to our country. This is because the Georgian Dream openly and clearly violates all the conditions it has given to our European allies. This is only in Russia's interests, Russia propaganda will actively use this opportunity to reiterate that Georgia has no future in terms of relations with Europe, and this is actually the task of the Georgian Dream, which on the one hand speaks of rapprochement with Europe and on the other hand creates, so to speak, insurmountable

obstacles in our relations with the EU. This is the reality we face today, which we must change during the elections by seeing off the Georgian Dream from the government. Our country has no other way to ensure our Euro-Atlantic future," Samadashvili said.

Davit Zalkaliani says Russia deliberately spreads misinformation, as if Georgia sheltered Afghan refugees

"Russian agencies are deliberately spreading misinformation as if Tbilisi and Georgia have sheltered Afghan refugees, and that we have turned Tbilisi into a refuge for Afghan refugees," Georgian Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs Davit Zalkaliani stated.

As the Minister emphasized, the matter concerns only a few dozen people, in particular, employees of the IMF, the World Bank, the American Democratic Development Fund, the International Republican Institute, the Asian Development Bank and other international organizations in Afghanistan, whose evacuation in Georgia is carried out in close coordination with international partners. These persons will stay in Georgia for only a few hours and after that they will travel to their destination countries.

"This is a temporary measure and in the near future they will be redirected to different countries in the United States and Europe," stated the minister.

FRIDAY		AUGUST 27	
Day		Sunny sky	High: 35°C
Night		Mostly clear	Low: 22°C
SATURDAY		AUGUST 28	
Day		Sunny sky	High: 36°C
Night		Mostly clear	Low: 22°C

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43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia

Founded by Prof.
Zaza Gachechiladze
Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Phone: +995 99 56 56 21; +995 77 76 00 00
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli
Commercial Director**Mariam Mchedlidze**
Editor-in-Chief**Natalia Kochiashvili**
Executive Editor**Nino Kavelashvili**
Design and Layout

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