



Election Observation:

Armenian Presidential Elections 19 February 2008¹

(Oslo and Yerevan 11 March 2008) The 19 February 2008 Presidential elections in Armenia were the fifth after independence in 1991. Recent amendments to the Electoral Code were meant to lead Armenia closer to complying with international commitments regarding free and fair elections. The government repeatedly stated its intent to comply with these commitments.

The election campaign was active, and most candidates were able to participate without insurmountable obstacles. Concerns remain however that the Presidential candidate Serge Sargsyan abused his position as Prime Minister to benefit from State means in his campaign.

Although Public TV and radio fulfilled their obligation to provide free airtime to the contenders of the elections, the overall media coverage was unbalanced. Serge Sargsyan received more and overall positive TV coverage, whereas his main contender, Levon ter-Petrosian was extensively presented in a negative way.

Election Day was marked by reports about vote fraud, violence and intimidation, and the results are disputed after many observers reported on serious violations during counting.

In general there was a lack of public trust in the electoral process. These elections did not contribute to improving such trust, as was clearly manifested by post-elections demonstrations.

¹ Drafted by Lene Wetteland, who went on an election fact-finding mission for the Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC) during the 19 February 2008 presidential elections in Armenia, and edited by Gunnar M. Karlsen, Deputy Secretary General, and Berit Lindeman, Advis or. Mrs Wetteland did not observe in person at polling stations, but carried out investigations in cooperation with domestic and international observers in the pre-election period, on Election Day and during post-election procedures and protests. On Election Day, she was based in the premises of an NGO Election Hotline with teams responding to calls from the public about irregularities. The response teams verified incidents referred to in this report. Other information is drawn reports and news outlets (mainly armenialiberty.org and a1plus.am), and personal interviews with observers and voters.

Political Background

Armenia gained independence from the Soviet Union on 23 September 1991. The acting chairman of the Supreme Soviet, Levon Ter-Petrossyan, was elected first President in an election considered to be free in October 1991. His re-election in the Presidential Elections in 1996 was disputed because of several violations of the election law.

After controversy over the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Ter-Petrossyan was forced to step down on 2 February 1998. The acting Prime Minister Robert Kocharyan was elected President in Extraordinary Presidential Elections in 1998, and re-elected in round two of yet another disputed Presidential Elections in March 2003. The incumbent President had been two consecutive terms in office, and could by law not run for another term in the 2008 elections.

The Republic of Armenia has a row of political challenges, in particular related to neighbourly relations. Conflicting perceptions of the First World War mass killings of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire are still creating serious problems between Armenia and Turkey. Armenian authorities claim that the killings amounted to genocide, while Turkey rejects this.² Based on this and other issues, Turkey has closed its border with Armenia and there is no diplomatic relations between the countries.

Armenia's border with neighbouring Azerbaijan is also closed due to a conflict over the enclave Nagorno-Karabakh on Azeri territory. After extensive war actions from 1988-1994, the countries have still not reached an agreement over the territory.

Armenia is a landlocked country with few natural resources and is struggling to create a viable economy for its citizens. Over the last years corruption has been rampant, but the economy is none the less improving. Exiled Armenians making earnings in Russia, the US and France, return substantial funds to family members living in Armenia. Many Armenians living in exile also buy property in Yerevan, creating a booming housing market. These developments, however, have not benefited the regions to the same extent as it has benefited the capital.

² According to the 1948 UN Genocide Convention, killings may amount to genocide only if there is "an intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such". Turkish authorities deny that this was the case, but acknowledge that Armenians were killed as a result of war.

Electoral System

To run for President a candidate must have had Armenian citizenship and lived in Armenia for the previous ten years, be of more than 35 years of age and eligible to vote. The President is elected for a five-year period, and the same person cannot sit as President more than two consecutive terms. The President should be elected with more than 50% of the votes. In the case where none of the candidates gets more than 50%, a second round of elections will be carried out 14 days after Election Day. In the second round, including only the two candidates that get the most votes, the President is elected by majority of the vote.

According to the Constitution, the President has extensive powers. However, in appointing a Prime Minister, the President has to appoint a person who enjoys support of the majority of the National Assembly. After the May 2007 Parliamentary Elections, a strong majority in the 131-member National Assembly supports the current government. There are 65 members of the *Republican Party* in a coalition with 25 members from the *Prosperous Armenia Party* and in cooperation with 16 members from the *Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF)*. The opposition party *Rule of Law* has eight members and The *Heritage Party* seven members. Ten members are not aligned.

The Constitution provides that all elections and referenda should be held on the basis of the right to universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot. Upon voting the voter shall show his or her passport or other valid identification and sign next to his or her name on the Voters List. The voting booth should face the Precinct Election Commission and ensure the secrecy of the voting. Voting will take place between 08.00 and 20.00 on Election Day. Any complaints or requirements for recounting should be presented by 14.00 the following day. There should not be an excessive number of people in the precinct.

The Armenian Electoral Code was amended in November 2007 to comply with recommendations made by the OSCE/ODIHR. Some of the most important changes involve the right to vote at the place of actual residence instead of registered residence. In order to avoid multiple voting the voter's passport will now be stamped upon voting. The deposit sum for presidential candidates has been increased from 5 to 8 million Armenian Drams (AMD) (from about 11 000 to 17 500 Euro), and there is no longer need for support signatures. Candidates also have the possibility for self-nomination. Candidates must report on their campaign expenditure twice.

The Election Code provides that both public and private media are required to present impartial information about candidates, and that candidates have “equal conditions for access to mass media”.³ Printed campaign material shall be published and disseminated freely, and community leaders shall designate areas for posters equally. Election campaigning is subject to limitations for candidates who have state-, government- and local government positions. Funding of campaigning is also limited for institutions with links to state, local government or with foreign assets exceeding 30%.

The Election Code Article 22.1 place “restrictions on pre-election campaigning by candidates who occupy political or discretionary positions or are state servants, civil servants or local self-government servants.” There were disagreements whether the incumbent Prime Minister’s not taking leave during the presidential campaign was a violation of the Electoral Code or not, but the Central Election Commission ruled that he could continue his duties.

There is however no doubt that the presidential candidate took advantage of his role as Prime Minister during the election campaign. His campaign posters were displayed on public buildings and constructions, his party flags were seen in connection with the Armenian Army’s 16 years celebration, and public TV dedicated substantial time to the Prime Minister’s achievements during his period in office. According to the International Election Observation Mission, the Prime Minister’s Republican Party used offices located in self-government buildings as campaign offices, and local self-government representatives campaigned actively for the Prime Minister.⁴

³ OSCE/ODIHR, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, European Parliament International Election Observation Mission, Presidential Election, Republic of Armenia, 19 February 2008, *Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions*, Yerevan, 20 February 2008, page 7.

⁴ *Op.cit.*, page 6.

Registration of Candidates

Nine candidates had been nominated by the deadline on 6 December 2007, and by 18 January 2008 the Central Election Commission had registered all the candidates. None of these candidates withdrew from the campaign by the deadline on 8 February 2008.

The nine candidates were presented in alphabetical order on the ballots:

- Artur Baghdasaryan from the opposition Rule of Law Party
- Artashes Geghamyan from the National Unity Party
- Aram Harutyunyan from the National Accord Party
- Vahan Hovhannisyan from the Armenian Revolutionary Federation
- Tigran Karapetyan from the People's Party
- Vazgen Manukyan from the National Democratic Union
- Arman Melikyan, self-nominated
- Serge Sargsyan, Prime Minister from the Republican Party
- Levon Ter-Petrossyan, former President, self-nominated.

One candidate from the Heritage Party, Raffi Hovhannisyan, was rejected on the grounds that he had not lived in Armenia for the previous ten years.

The main rivals' political platforms on domestic policy issues were not easily distinguished. Both Sargsyan and Ter-Petrossyan aimed to reduce the bloated public administration and fight corruption. They promised to improve regional development and establish rule of law and democracy in Armenia. In the economic area Ter-Petrossyan advocates principles of market economy, whilst Sargsyan argued in favour of introducing corporate management systems. They both are well-known political figures, Ter-Petrossyan being the first elected President of the independent Armenia, and Sargsyan serving as current Prime Minister.

Foreign policy issues attracted most attention during the campaign. Ter-Petrossyan stated that he was willing to demonstrate "political will toward the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. He would, however, defend the right of the Armenian people of Artsakh⁵ to self-determination and

⁵ **Artsakh**, was at various times a province of the Armenian Kingdom and at others, of Caucasian Albania, and covered what is now mostly Nagorno-Karabakh. The name today is used mostly by Armenians to refer to Nagorno-Karabakh. Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artsakh>. Downloaded 11 March 2008.

pursuit of a resolution to the conflict on the basis of a mutually acceptable compromise.⁶ He offers amnesty to young men who have escaped the country to avoid military service, and plans to establish a professional army.

According to Sargsyan's program for "Settlement of the Nagorno-Karabagh issue", the following principles should prevail: The right of the Artsakh people to self-determination should be recognized and conditions should be created for ensuring it. Security of the Nagorno-Karabagh population and its borders should be ensured, [and] Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh should have a common border. Regular relations with neighboring states will be established with "no preconditions, such as the rejection of the necessity to recognize the Armenian Genocide or any precondition associated with the Nagorno-Karabagh issue, or any other underlying issues."⁷

Both candidates used the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict frequently in their campaign for support.

Electoral Administration

The election process is administered by the Central Election Commission (CEC) which heads 41 Territorial Election Commissions (TEC) and 1923 Precinct Election Commissions (PEC). Each commission consists of a "troika" of a Chair, a Deputy Chair and a Secretary who have been elected. The CEC has eight members. One is nominated by the President, five by the parties represented in the Parliament, and two by the Council of Chairmen of the Republic of Armenia Courts. Further appointments are made hierarchically as each CEC member nominates one TEC member who nominates one PEC member. The opposition parties in this way appointed only seven of the 123 troika members, while a large number of persons were appointed from the Republican Party and its political allies. This raises issues on the impartiality of the election administration.⁸

Three training sessions were carried out for the commission members, and 50 000 people received certification.

⁶ Official website of Levon Ter-Petrossyan, <http://69.50.223.104/~levonfor/?lang=eng>. Downloaded 6 February 2008.

⁷ Official website of Serge Sargsyan, <http://www.serzhsargsyan.am/?l=eng&page=program>. Downloaded 6 February 2008.

Voter Registration

The Passport and Visa Department (OVIR) of the police are responsible for maintaining the National Register of Voters. As of 17 February, well above 2.3 million voters were registered. Several commentators said this number seemed artificially high.

According to political analyst David Petrosyan, there were 2 million registered voters in the 1991 vote for independence. A large part of the population has emigrated during the 1990s and 2000s, and there has also been a decline in population due to the war over Nagorno-Karabakh and the resulting hardship in Armenia.⁹

The number of more than 2.3 million registered voters is therefore disputed on factual grounds. Additionally, there were reports on carousel voting and people additionally registered on domestic addresses on Election Day, adding to suspicions that the number had been manipulated.¹⁰

Election Campaign

Not all candidates campaigned actively, and there was no public debate between them. Some of the candidates had websites in Armenian, some also in Russian and English.

An atmosphere of election campaigning was definitely present in Yerevan from the start of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC) mission on 6 February. Posters were seen all over the city, and people were discussing the upcoming elections and the candidates. Overall, people were not obstructed from attending rallies, though there were reports on forced attendance on Sargsyan's rallies.¹¹ In media most candidates were shown regularly, though it was clear that the acting Prime Minister and Presidential Candidate Serge Sargsyan got more coverage than other candidates since he remained in his duties as Prime Minister during the pre-election period.

According to the Electoral Code, community leaders shall allocate equal amount of designated space to each candidate. However, posters of Sargsyan were found on private commercial billboards, on lampposts, on a vast number of private shops and businesses, and also on several

⁸ See International Election Observer Mission, *op.cit.*, page 4.

⁹ NHC interview with David Petrosyan, Yerevan 9 February 2008.

¹⁰ According to The CEC, voter turnout was 69%. It means that about 1,6 million people cast their vote in the elections. On carousel voting, see chapter on election day.

¹¹ NHC Interview with nursery staff in Erebuni, 15 February 2008.

public buildings like the City Metro Administration. There were also large banners and signs on central transport routes. Posters of the other candidates were also placed on non-designated places, but they were less visible, often placed in shop windows in small streets. These posters were frequently torn down.

Sargsyan had clearly access to larger resources than other candidates. Some of his campaign material was posted on public buildings, and some local self-government officials campaigned in favour of him. The campaigning conditions were clearly not equal for the candidates.¹²

During the last two days of campaigning there were two big rallies on the Liberty Square, central Yerevan. On Ter-Petrosyan's rally on 16 February, the square was filled thousands of dedicated supporters shouting slogans and carrying posters, dedicating more than four hours to the rally.

On 17 February, the central street Mashtots was packed with women in their forties, waiting for the parade to the Liberty Square to start. There were buses with "Forward Armenia" banners many places. Many of the persons approached by the NHC representative said they had been told by their superiors at their workplace to attend the rally. There is, however, no evidence that anyone who denied participation lost his or her job. Half an hour after the start of the rally, the square was empty and banners and flags were lying in the melted snow.

On several occasions in the pre-election period people were approached by visitors who offered them 5000 AMD (about 11 Euro) in exchange for a signature on a promise to vote for Sargsyan. This money was paid the day before or on Election Day. Some people, encouraged by public statements underlining the secrecy of the vote, took the money, but voted for other candidates.¹³

Many people with whom the NHC talked with, were distrustful to the upcoming elections and were convinced Serge Sargsyan would falsify the vote in order to win. Some said this made them reluctant to participate in the elections. Others said they had decided to vote for Sargsyan's main opponent Ter-Petrosyan, "despite having had bad experience with him during his term as President".

According to the International Election Observations Mission, Sargsyan received most coverage by five of six monitored private TV channels. *Armenia TV* gave him double the coverage as any other

¹² NHC heard from many voters that they reacted negatively to Sargsyan's abuse of government resources, the expensive-looking cars bearing Sargsyan's flag, and decided not to vote for Sargsyan on these grounds.

¹³ NHC interviews with residents in Erebuni, south Yerevan, 17 and 18 February 2008.

candidate. Sargsyan also had more positive coverage than any other candidates. News broadcast rarely presented negative remarks toward him or government policy.¹⁴

Ter-Petrosyan reacted to what he called “insurmountable obstacles” to his election campaign as public media were mentioning him only in negative terms, and turned to the Constitutional Court.¹⁵ His request to postpone elections because of these obstacles was dismissed on 11 February, but the court found the request plausible and recommended the National Commission on TV and Radio (NCTR) to address the issue.

There were a few reports of people being impeded to attend campaign events by village heads or police officers. These incidents involved campaign events of Ter-Petrosian and Baghdasaryan. There were also reports of violence against campaign officers and activists working for Ter-Petrosian's, Sargsyan and Baghdasaryan.¹⁶

Election Day

On Election Day a Hotline run by the Civil Society Institute, Free Forum for Civil Initiatives and the Armenian Committee of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly received 476 calls. In comparison, a similar Hotline received 300 calls on irregularities during the Parliamentary Elections in May 2007. The 40 cars the organisers had in action as “Ambulances” all over the country were constantly on the move.

Many of the earlier calls concerned voter lists. Voters found that their name had already been signed for, or that the names of deceased people or people not living in Armenia were on the list.¹⁷

As the Election Day proceeded, phone calls pointed to more serious issues, and the observers and journalists who returned from these “Ambulances” told the NHC representative that they were shocked over the amount of violations they had witnessed. There was also great concern about the counting process that was about to begin.

¹⁴ See International Election Observer Mission, *op.cit.*, page 7.

¹⁵ NHC interview with Levon Ter-Petrosyan campaign member Artak Zeynalyan, 9 February 2008.

¹⁶ See International Election Observer Mission, *op.cit.*, page 5-6.

¹⁷ See above chapter on Voter Registration.

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The preliminary statistics of the Hotline documents several cases of:

- Ballot stuffing:
 - *Malatia School 174 Polling Station (PS) 7/12;*
 - *PS 27/25;*
 - *PS 13/11;*
 - *PS 11/17;*
 - *PS 13/28;*
 - *Malatia PS 8/21.*
- Open voting:
 - *PS 24/5;*
 - *PS 24/14*
- Additional people registered on private addresses or as patients in hospital:
 - From the town of *Ashtarak* more than 10 citizens called after finding additional people registered on their domestic address;
 - *Sevan Hospital* had registered 40 voters more than they had patients;
 - *PS 6/29*. additional person registered on domestic address.
- Threats towards proxies, observers or "Ambulance" crew:
 - *PS 14/7*: Proxy *Suna Malkhasyan* was threatened to stop commenting and leave the PS immediately;
 - *PS 1/10*: PEC crew threatening observers;
 - *School 132 PS 7/18*: observer grabbed and threatened;
 - *PS11/17*: ambulance crew threatened;
 - *PS 5/21*: observers threatened by proxies after commenting lack of stamping.
- "Carousel" voting, i.e. minibuses bringing people from polling station to polling station:
 - *vicinity of GUM, central Yerevan*: *Nune Varduhin* saw and recorded people who arrived with buses, were given papers and orders, and then driven from Pollings Station to Polling Station;
 - *PS 5/21*: people vote many times;
 - *PS 34/24, 34/25, 34/26*: people brought in marshrutkas (minibuses);
 - the MP *Arsen Avakyan* observes marshrutka number 57 driving from Polling Station to Polling Station;
 - *PS 4/27 and 4/28*;
 - *PS 11/03*;
 - *School 100*.
- Money distributed to people in vicinity of polling station:

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- *Vanadzor PS 29/11, 29/12*: money distributed in front of Polling Station and a shop;
- *PS 3/20*: people approach a black PRADO before they vote;
- *PS 3/27*: men in a red Opel has a voter's list, and people go to the car before voting;
- *PS 34/24, 34/25, 34/26*: people receive money from a BMW;
- *Norq district*: people are given money and told to vote for Sargsyan.
- Journalists or private persons who had their camera or memory chip taken from them:
 - *vicinity of GUM, central Yerevan*: Nune Varduhin saw and recorded people who arrived with buses, were given papers and orders, and then driven from Polling Station to Polling Station in white NIVAs. From one NIVA they stepped out and took her camera by force;
 - *Malatia School 174 PS 7/12*: ambulance crew Elmira Matevosyan films ballot stuffing and police takes camera and chip.

There were also some instances of direct violence, like:

- *School 162*: Fighting at Polling Station;
- *PS 4/24*: Fighting at Polling Station;
- *PS 7/12*: Proxies with torn clothes crying;
- *Artashat 17/10*: Karine Ivanyan told people to stop their violations and was beaten;
- *Erebuni 13/16*: MP and local observer Zaruhi Pastandjyan being beaten up by the police (a lawyer filmed the incident);
- *Malatia 8/21*: Parkev Mnatsakanyan hospitalised as a result of beating.

In a statement of 22 February, Human Rights Watch reported, "in nine cases documented by Human Rights Watch, assailants intimidated, threatened, and even violently attacked opposition party activists, domestic observers and journalists at eight polling stations in and around the capital, Yerevan."¹⁸ The organisation asks for official investigation into these cases.

Armenian TV-channels, except Yerkir Media, did not report on irregularities. However, there was a tense atmosphere surrounding many polling stations, an atmosphere bound to intimidate voters. NHC also heard reports that many people felt threatened or forced by their close superiors to vote for one or the other candidate.

¹⁸ Human Rights Watch, *Armenia: Violence at Polling Stations Mars Elections. Assailants Target Opposition Activists, Observers and Journalists*, New York, February 22, 2008. Available at: <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2008/02/21/armeni18128.htm> Downloaded 25 February 2008.

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Many people present at polling stations recorded incidents of ballot stuffing and carousel voting on their mobile phones, but were subject to threats or violence from “athletic-looking men.” In many cases their mobile phones were broken.¹⁹

The Prosecutor General’s office received 61 complaints by the end of Election Day, and the CEC received 55 complaints in the pre-election period. According to the OSCE/ODIHR, 25 complaints were rejected in one short-notice extraordinary session without plaintiffs being present.²⁰ According to procedure, each complaint should have been handled in separate sessions.

According to the 20 February International Election Observation Mission statement, the counting was assessed as “bad” or “very bad” in 16% of the polling stations visited.²¹

Post-Election Issues

On the morning following the elections the CEC presented numbers giving Sargsyan between 51% and 56% of the vote, numbers that were disputed from many sides. Ter-Petrosyan immediately gathered thousands of people in protest, marching through the streets of Yerevan and asking for a recount of the votes. The Ter-Petrosyan camp stated that their sit-down protest in the Liberty Square would be peaceful for the time being, but that they were ready to “fight to the end.”

In the days after the elections, an exchange of claims and counter-claims between the opposition and the government took place. The Ter-Petrosyan camp brought statements concerning irregularities during elections while the public television channel soon would refute this as baseless allegations in its news reporting. Public television portrayed the demonstrators in Liberty Square as alcoholics and drug addicts, and the gathering as chaotic.

The CEC recounted some votes as requested by Ter-Petrosyan and Artur Baghdasaryan. After recounting of the votes however, the result of the elections remained more or less the same as the initial results.

¹⁹ See reports by armenialiberty.org, a1plus.am, and armenianow.com

²⁰ *International Election Observation Mission*, op.cit., page 8.

²¹ OSCE/ODIHR, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, European Parliament International Election Observation Mission, Presidential Election, Republic of Armenia, 19 February

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Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Yerkir Media broadcasted some incidents from the recounting:

- An envelope with Ter-Petrosyan votes was opened and looked through, then put on the table. A person grabs the envelope, leaves the room and does not return. A foreign observer asks what happened to the envelope, and the PEC representative denies any knowledge of the envelope he just held in his hands. There is no envelope, what can we do about it, he asks.
- In another polling station approximately 150 Ter-Petrosyan votes is found in a bag for Serge Sargsyan votes. I do not know how that happened, the PEC representative says.²²

After Election Day there were several home searches and arrests of private and official persons on dubious grounds, and some have lost their jobs after signalling their support with the protesters.²³

Conclusions

The pre-election campaign was mainly characterised by an open competition between candidates who were able to campaign freely. However, it became clear that Prime Minister Serge Sargsyan benefited greatly from his post, and that the media represent a far from neutral picture, particularly disavouring Ter-Petrosyan.

Reports and stories circulated about vote buying, people being impeded from attending rallies, and there was a widespread perception that elections results would be falsified.

Many observations of irregularities with the voter lists on election day adds to a negative image of the overall fairness of the elections, and contributed to public distrust of the election results presented by the CEC. Observers also reported negatively on the fairness of the counting process, further contributing to distrust.

2008, *Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions*, Yerevan, 20 February 2008, page 10. Available at: http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2008/02/29775_en.pdf. Downloaded 10 March 2008.

²² Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty radio and television reporting from the recounting took place in the period 21-24 February. For more on irregularities during recounting, see OSCE/ODIHR, *Post-Election Interim Report*, 20 February-3 March 2008, page 5-6. Available at: http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2008/03/30090_en.pdf. Downloaded 11 March 2008.

²³ See NHC report, *State of emergency in Armenia*, for extensive reporting on post-election demonstrations and unrest and the government response. The report is available at: <http://www.nhc.no/php/files/documents/land/Armenia/2008/rapport-u-tilstand-080307.doc>

Public television neglecting the problems in its reporting on the election further undermines the public's trust in the process. The right of assembly and free movement was also infringed upon, as public transport on the day following the election was very limited, and many roads from the regions to Yerevan were closed.

The adoption of legal amendments in line with OSCE recommendations as well as comprehensive training of election officials indicated an effort to improve conduct of the elections. Also repeated government statements that elections would be free and fair, gave reason for high expectations. However, these expectations were not fulfilled.

A very serious problem was the prevalence of violence and intimidation at several polling stations. Responsibility remains with the government to ensure that there are proper investigations into the reported instances of such violence.

The new amendments to the Electoral Code regarding the possibility to vote at the place of residence and the stamping of the passports was a positive step, but were not fully implemented.

Recommendations

The Norwegian Helsinki Committee calls upon Armenian authorities to:

- Initiate an inclusive dialogue between the majority and the opposition on measures and strategies to improve elections and promote public trust
- Ensure that proper investigations into reports of people being impeded to attend rallies and violence against campaign activists and officers during the election campaign period are conducted
- Ensure that proper investigations into reports of violence at polling stations are conducted. Perpetrators of such violence should be held accountable
- Adopt additional measures to safeguard against multiple voting, by
 - Improving implementation of the requirement to stamp passports after voting
 - Facilitation public scrutiny of the Voters List, in order to ensure that deceased persons are omitted, that additional persons are not registered on private addresses, etc.

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- Initiating stricter measures to ensure that candidates who remain in public offices while becoming a candidate for elections do not abuse public resources
- Ensure that the National Commission on Television and Radio (NCTR) adequately fulfil its mandate to monitor media compliance of election legislation

The Norwegian Helsinki Committee calls upon The OSCE and the Council of Europe to:

- Monitor investigation and prosecution of persons suspected of violence at polling stations or otherwise linked to the elections
- Demand for more pluralism in the media, both related to coverage of elections and in reporting on other political issues. Legislation should specify sanctions against media which does not comply to election regulations
- Demand for public scrutiny of the Voter List, and measures to ensure that no one votes more than once
- Condemn excessive use of force against demonstrators, and call for international investigation into government response to unrest, including declaration of a state of emergency on 1 March