

EPDE STATEMENT

THE RETURN OF THE WESTERN COLLUDERS: FAKE OBSERVERS AT THE GEORGIAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 2024

The European Platform for Democratic Elections (EPDE), in cooperation with researcher Eto Buziashvili, Research Associate of the Atlantic Council's DFRLab, has identified 23 politically biased observers who helped whitewash the fraudulent 2024 Georgian Parliamentary Election. Authoritarian regimes like Russia and Azerbaijan have long relied on such observers to legitimize rigged elections. While heightened scrutiny has curbed this practice in recent years, the troubling resurgence of Western-affiliated observers in Georgia marks a new and concerning trend.

The Georgian Parliamentary elections held on October 26, 2024, starkly underscored the erosion of democratic principles under the Georgian Dream (GD) government. Both the pre-election period and election day were [marked](#) by widespread abuse of administrative resources, voter intimidation, changes to CEC composition and procedures, restricted observer access, voter identification manipulation, and serious violations of vote secrecy. Systematic ballot stuffing, multiple voting, and voter turnout figures exceeding 100% of registered male voters have been well evidenced [\(1\)](#) [\(2\)](#). These blatant manipulations disregard not only the will of the Georgian people but also undermine the broader regional stability and democratic norms.

FRAUDULENT TACTICS AND THE ROLE OF FAKE OBSERVERS

To mask the fraudulent electoral process, politically biased observers were incorporated into the process to support the official Georgian Dream narrative, including representatives from Western democracies and members of the European, national, regional parliaments from Germany, France, Poland, Spain, as well as from Hungary, to create a veneer of legitimacy. *Read more about the fake observation phenomenon [here](#).*

Prominent among these politically biased observers were figures who produced statements that blatantly misrepresented the electoral process:

“ *The elections held yesterday were a significant step forward towards the European political family, as despite the differences between political parties, almost all parties speak of the political will for Georgia's accession to the European Union”, [claimed](#) Polish national Ryszard Henryk Czarnecki, former MEP and member of the PiS party. Czarnecki has been at the heart of different scandals, including [corruption allegations](#), as well as him severely insulting MEP Róża Thun, which led to his [dismissal from the position of Vice-President](#) of the European Parliament for "serious breaches" of the Rules of Procedure.*

“***"I didn't see any kind of violation and they didn't report anything, everything was calm",*** [said](#) Ulrich Singer, a member of the Bavarian State Parliament (Germany) of the AfD faction. Singer has been very [active as a fake observer](#). He helped whitewash illegal Russian presidential elections in Ukraine's occupied territories in 2024, as well as the 2021 parliamentary elections in Russia and 2020 Parliamentary election in Azerbaijan.

“***"From my observations, the public was imbued with trust in the electoral process. Georgia was the first country to use a new voting system, the reliability of which few people doubted, including the reliability of the secrecy of the vote. I was surprised by the unanimity of the people",*** [said](#) Loup Bommier, Mayor of Gurgy-le-Château and member of the far-right party UDR (Union des droites pour la République). He has already gathered [experience](#) as fake observer at the fraudulent 2024 Russian presidential election.

“***"There was no possibility of election fraud, and all political party members know this well, since they themselves participated in the commission. In terms of meeting various conditions, the election process in Georgia was conducted at a higher level than in some democratic countries of the European Union",*** [said](#) Nikodem Bernaciak, Analyst at the Ultra-conservative Ordo Iuris Institute for Legal Culture, Poland, an Ultra-conservative think tank whose representatives have been engaged in fake observation before, including at the [2022 Hungarian Parliamentary elections](#).

“***"Everything is happening in accordance with the relevant regulations, according to the rules. The general view, which our experience dictates to us, is that these are very free elections and the entire process is going perfectly. Democracy is at the forefront and, therefore, in the end, trust will be expressed. From what we have seen, the relevant conditions are being implemented and everything is happening in accordance with the highest standards of free and fair elections,"*** [said](#) András László, Hungarian Member of the European Parliament, from Orban's Fidesz party.

The statements starkly contrast with credible reports from independent election monitoring organizations and local civic groups that documented widespread voter intimidation, misuse of administrative resources, and ballot-stuffing, and [call for decisive action](#).

CALL TO ACTION

EPDE strongly condemns the involvement of politically biased observers to distort international perceptions. We call on the international community to take the following actions:

- **Impose Sanctions:** The EU and democratic states should consider targeted sanctions and visa restrictions on non-EU citizens involved in fake election observation and other activities aimed at legitimizing fraudulent elections.
- **Review Code of Conduct for elected and appointed officials:** Institutions, including at the regional and municipal level, should further tighten their codes of conduct to prevent the participation of their representatives in politically biased observation activities. These codes of conduct should emphasize impartiality and non-alignment with authoritarian regimes.

- **Support Independent Monitoring:** Increased support for independent election monitoring organizations and local civic groups is essential to ensure credible election oversight in future Georgian elections.
- **Review Cooperation and Funding:** EU and US institutions should review all cooperation and funding with organizations deploying fake observers.
- **Regularly Check the EPDE Database:** International organizations, political parties, and media outlets should regularly consult EPDE’s list of fake observers at fakeobservers.org. This database aims to deter participation by those who, whether due to blackmail, financial incentives, or naivety, legitimize undemocratic elections.

The discrediting of international election observation through fake observers poses a direct threat to democracy and transparency. EPDE remains committed to exposing such practices and advocating for robust international action to protect the integrity of electoral processes worldwide.

LIST OF IDENTIFIED FAKE OBSERVERS

By 16 December, EPDE has identified 23 individuals involved as fake election observers during the Georgian Parliamentary elections 2024:

	Name	Country of Residence	Affiliation
1	François-Xavier Gicquel	France	Director of operations at SOS Chrétiens d’Orient (SOSCO)
2	Marc Gairin	France	Mayor of Momy, Rassemblement National
3	Loup Bommier	France	Mayor of Gurgy-le-Château, “UDR” (Union des droites pour la République) party
4	Claude Jean Robert Alfred Fritz	France	The individual was presented by Georgian pro-government media as a journalist; however, his identity could not be independently verified.
5	Alain Avril	France	Founder of the clothing brand Aper
6	Ulrich Singer	Germany	Member of the Bavarian State Parliament, AfD
7	Ryszard Henryk Czarnecki	Poland	Former MEP, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS) party
8	Patryk Ignaszczak	Poland	Analyst at the Center of International Law, The Ordo Iuris Institute for Legal Culture

9	Nikodem Bernaciak	Poland	Senior Analyst, Coordinator of the program "Family and marriage", The Ordo Iuris Institute for Legal Culture
10	Kamil Smulski	Poland	Coordinator of the Freedom and Responsibility Program at the Ordo Iuris Institute for Legal Culture
11	Beata Trochanowska	Poland	Assistant at the Center for Procedural Intervention, The Ordo Iuris Institute for Legal Culture
12	András László	Hungary	Member of the European Parliament, Patriots for Europe Group, Fidesz
13	Lőrinc Nacsa	Hungary	Member of the National Assembly of Hungary, Member of the Hungarian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) in block with Fidesz
14	Fanni Lajkó	Hungary	Analyst at the Center for Fundamental Rights (CFR)
15	Juan Efraín Rocha	Hungary	Government Official in the Department for Nationalities of the Prime Minister's Office Hungary
16	Juan Antonio Delgado Ramos	Spain	Member of the Andalusian Parliament, Podemos party
17	Luke Uribe-Etxebarria Apalategi	Spain	Member of the Basque Parliament, Basque National Party (EAJ-PNV)
18	Jorge González-Gallarza Hernández	Spain	Senior Coordinator for the Iberosphere & Senior Fellow at the Center for Fundamental Rights (CFR)
19	David Bitan	Israel	Member of the Israeli Knesset, Chairman of the Knesset Economics Committee, Likud party
20	Evgeny Sova	Israel	Member of the Knesset, nationalist party Yisrael Beiteinu
21	Olta Qejvani	Albania	Albanian Institute for Election System Development at Aleksandër Moisiu University of Durrës
22	Arzu Naghiyev (Nağiyev)	Azerbaijan	MP, Head of the interparliamentary working group Azerbaijan-Georgia
23	Candela Sol Silva	Argentina	President of the Argentinian Youth branch of Italian political party Fratelli d'Italia

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