

Preliminary Assessment of the Observation of the Elections to the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia

Independent Observer

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Translator's note: This Word document is a professional English translation of the Armenian source document. Party and institution names are rendered in English where a direct and contextually appropriate equivalent is clear.

Addendum as of June 17, 2026

At the time the Independent Observer Alliance's preliminary assessment was being prepared, the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Armenia, upon reviewing the decisions of Territorial Electoral Commissions No. 11 and No. 35, declared the voting results of polling stations No. 10/51 and No. 35/65 invalid, while Territorial Electoral Commission No. 12 declared the voting results of polling station No. 12/13 invalid. In the first two polling stations, the annulment of the results was caused by the voting of servicemen after 20:00, where there was a substantiated suspicion that not all servicemen who had been given the opportunity to vote could have been present in the voting room as of 20:00, as required by Article 68 of the Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia. The reason for declaring the voting results of polling station No. 12/13 invalid was that it had been established that, on election day, until 18:00, the ballots of the National Democratic Pole party had been absent from that polling station.

As a result of the annulment of the voting results in the above-mentioned polling stations, the votes received by the Prosperous Armenia Party would no longer have been sufficient to overcome the electoral threshold established by the Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia, and the Prosperous Armenia Party challenged the annulment decisions through judicial proceedings. The Independent Observer Alliance was confident that the results in all three polling stations should have been declared invalid and a repeat vote should have been scheduled, which would have ensured the restoration of the electoral rights of voters in those polling stations. The same position was also expressed by the Administrative Court examining Prosperous Armenia's complaint.

On the day following the dissemination of the preliminary assessment, the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Armenia drew up the protocol on the election results, deciding not to schedule a repeat vote, thereby effectively disregarding the votes of the voters of the above-mentioned polling stations. The Independent Observer Alliance considers that the failure to schedule a repeat vote in these polling stations is unlawful and undermines public confidence in the election results. The Independent Observer intends to undertake possible legal actions with the aim of protecting voters' subjective rights and ensuring that the precedent of influencing the election results through a CEC decision does not remain without legal consequences.

Elections to the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia

The elections to the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia were held on 7 June 2026. Seventeen parties and two alliances of parties were nominated to participate in the elections. One of the nominated parties subsequently submitted a withdrawal. Recounts are currently under way and the final results have not yet been summarized. Nevertheless, the preliminary results make it possible to state that mandates in the National Assembly will be received by the Civil Contract Party, the Strong Armenia and Armenia alliances, and the Prosperous Armenia Party.

The recounts, which are also being observed by the Mission, are being conducted properly and, apart from corrections of evidently erroneous data entries, resolve the validity or invalidity of individual ballots without recording cases of falsification of the voting results. The invalidation of voting results in three precincts and the scheduling of repeat voting remain within the continued focus of the Independent Observer.

During the preparatory stage of the elections, the Independent Observer Alliance conducted long-term observation throughout the entire territory of the Republic of Armenia from 9 March 2026. At the initial stage, observation was carried out by 13 observers; from the launch of the campaign period, the Mission operated with 43 observers. During the two months preceding the official campaign, the Alliance's observers observed 52 gatherings and spoke with 118 participants of those gatherings. The Mission also observed 36 intra-party gatherings, including party congresses, meetings, or office openings. The Independent Observer issued a separate summary on party congresses. The observers mapped 281 party representations and spoke with 78 representatives. In their observation areas, the observers also mapped civil society organizations and spoke with representatives of 42 of them.

During the pre-election campaign period, from 8 May to 5 June, long-term observers observed 499 gatherings and conducted interviews with 735 participants of those gatherings. Interviews were conducted with 190 parliamentary candidates representing all parties participating in the elections.

Short-term observation, on election day, was carried out by approximately 700 observers, who visited at least once 1,906 of the 2,005 operating precincts, or 95 percent, during election day; 621 precincts were visited twice, 176 three times, and 79 more frequently, up to eight times. The morning session of the Precinct Electoral Commission was observed in 387 precincts, while the vote count was observed in 311 precincts and in all 38 Territorial Electoral Commissions. For the observation of the vote count, approximately 12 percent of all 2,005 precincts were selected through a sample built on the basis of an analysis of the 2021 results; the remaining precincts were selected during the day based on alerts concerning violations.

In parallel with the observation, interviews were also conducted with voters who had already voted, concerning their motives for decision-making and their attitudes toward electoral processes, without disclosing for whom they had voted.

The analysis of the statistically significant results of all these observations will be presented in due course.

The Independent Observer also published a summary of the legislation regulating the regular elections to the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, including the most recent legislative regulations.

Summary of the Observation of the Pre-Election Phase

The regular elections to the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia took place in rather exceptional political and geopolitical conditions, which the Independent Observer Alliance will address in greater detail in its subsequent analyses.

The positions of the political forces that submitted applications to participate in the elections are also exceptional in relation to the formation of a government. For example, in the case of five of the 17 parties nominated to participate in the National Assembly elections and one of the two alliances, the person heading the party list did not present himself as that force's candidate for prime minister. The registration of Tigran Urikhanyan, number one on the list of one of those five parties, the Alliance Party, and of Vardan Ghukasyan, number one on the list of the Democracy, Law and Discipline Party, was rejected on the grounds that they did not meet the constitutional requirement of permanent residence in the Republic of Armenia during the preceding four years. On 25 May, the Alliance Party withdrew from the electoral contest.

Thus, 17 parties and two alliances were nominated for the elections, with a total of 2,123 candidates. Sixteen parties and two alliances participated in the elections, with 1,854 candidates. The registration of 23 candidates from eight parties was rejected, and 83 candidates withdrew.

Candidate Lists by Political Force

Note: "NM" refers to candidates representing national minorities.

No.	Political force	Nominated candidates	Men, %	Women, %	National minority candidates	Rejected candidates	Withdrawals before election day	Invalid	Candidates as of election day
1	Reformist Party	83	54.22%	45.8%	0	0	0	0	83
2	"I Am Against Everyone" Democratic Party	87	70.00%	30.0%	0	0	57	0	30
3	"Strong Armenia" Alliance	200	65.15%	34.8%	3	0	2	0	198
4	Republican Party of Armenia	84	65.06%	34.9%	0	0	1	0	83
5	"New Force" Reformist Party	86	60.00%	40.0%	0	1	0	0	85
6	"Wings of Unity" Party	80	60.76%	39.2%	0	0	1	0	79
7	"Prosperous Armenia" Party	107	65.42%	34.6%	3	0	0	0	107
8	"National Democratic Front" Pan-Armenian Party	101	65.31%	34.7%	0	2	0	1	98
9	"Kochary National Revival and Awakening of the Nation" Party	88	64.56%	35.4%	0	4	5	0	79
10	Armenian National Congress Party	99	67.74%	32.3%	0	3	3	0	93
11	"Republic" Party	91	61.90%	38.1%	0	1	6	0	84
12	Christian Democratic Party	82	57.32%	42.7%	0	0	0	0	82
13	"Alliance" Progressive Centrist Party	84	51.90%	48.1%	1	5	0	0	0
14	"Democratic Consolidation" Party	82	59.26%	40.7%	0	0	1	0	81
15	"Democracy, Law, and Discipline" Party	93	58.33%	41.7%	0	6	3	0	84
16	"Civil Contract" Party	293	63.92%	36.1%	10	0	2	0	291
17	"Armenia" Alliance of Parties	214	66.36%	33.6%	4	0	0	0	214
18	"For the Republic: Alliance of Defenders of Democracy" Party	80	58.97%	41.0%	0	1	1	0	78
19	"Bright Armenia" Party	89	54.55%	45.5%	0	0	1	0	88
Total		2,123			21	23	83	1	1,937

Legal Actions During Long-Term Observation

Within the framework of long-term observation of the pre-election phase, from 7 February through 5 June 2026 inclusive, the Independent Observer Alliance sent 164 legal documents to the relevant bodies, including:

- 12 reports on alleged crimes to the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Armenia and investigative bodies;
- 6 reports to the Corruption Prevention Commission of the Republic of Armenia;
- 24 applications to the Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Armenia;
- 16 statements of claim to the Administrative Court of the Republic of Armenia;
- 106 inquiries to state and non-state bodies.

The Mission issued a separate note on these legal actions. [1]

The problems recorded during the pre-election phase are mainly encompassed by information on vote buying; requirements to conduct or participate in campaign activities under actual or alleged threats of dismissal; such practices were applied both through abuse of administrative resources and in the private sector. They also included numerous and varied violations related to campaigning, as well as the almost complete absence of impartial coverage in the media sphere and the dissemination of unverified, often evidently false information.

The development of campaign technologies is also noteworthy: from purely narrative techniques to campaign buses and symbols, the concealed support of newly established civic initiatives for party campaigning, and the extensive use of campaign theses presented outwardly in the form of sociological surveys.

At the same time, it should be noted that, given the highly polarized public mood, the fundamental rights of the subjects of political competition were preserved and the guarantees of equal conditions for campaigning, as established by the Electoral Code, operated. Abuses and questionable practices, in turn, were applied by both ruling and opposition parties, depending on the nature and scale of the resources at their disposal.

Continuous monitoring is necessary to assess the proportionality of actions already taken by law enforcement bodies, as well as their actions or inaction regarding reports submitted by the Independent Observer, civil society, and other political parties.

The summary and description of the main systemic problems observed in the process are provided below.

Political Influence in Educational Institutions and Involvement of Minors

Information collected by observers indicates that, in certain educational institutions, political influence and guidance were disseminated by representatives of educational institutions, management, as well as teaching and pedagogical staff. In those educational institutions, cases of campaigning for or against various parties were recorded. Although participation in gatherings is viewed from the perspective of the child's rights and cannot be restricted, it is obvious that this should never occur against a person's will and, in the case of a child, should not occur at the expense of their education. The involvement of minors and children in the political electoral contest was carried out by representatives of almost all political forces participating in the elections. More concerning is that minors were observed being involved in the commission of an administrative offense, namely damaging the posters of competing forces or obstructing their distribution.

Involvement of Community and State Officials in the Campaign

The most direct manifestations of abuse of administrative resources were recorded through the involvement in gatherings of a large number of employees of state institutions and community structures led by the

current authorities. Such involvement may be viewed as the use of official position by state and community servants in political processes with the aim of ensuring political influence in favor of the ruling force. According to observer reports, in a number of regions cases were recorded in which persons employed in state or community infrastructure were involved in political activity in campaign or organizational formats. In particular, it is noted that community authorities involved the heads and employees of various community-subordinate structures, including kindergartens, schools, cultural centers, and village administrations, in campaign work “through instructions or indirect pressure.” Of the 410 gatherings observed during working hours, only 217 took place without the involvement of employees of structures under community or regional administration subordination. It should be noted that the Civil Contract Party governs 60 percent of Armenia’s communities either alone or in coalition, while other parties govern in 40 percent of communities. Thus, involvement through the use of administrative resources occurred both in favor of the Civil Contract Party and in favor of opposition parties.

Cases of Dismissal and Violations of Labor Rights

The economic and social dependency of voters remains highly concerning. During the official campaign, the observation mission received alerts that employees of budgetary institutions had been dismissed due to political activity. In one confirmed case, an employee left the workplace upon personal application because of concern that they would be subjected to pressure by the head of the institution. From the perspective of legislative guarantees, employees in the private sector are more vulnerable; pressure and coercion against them were expressed both for the purpose of participating in gatherings and for carrying out campaign activities. In the context of labor rights, the involvement of citizens in unlawful actions, or their involvement in campaign activity on unlawful grounds, may also be considered. This includes registering a person in a private company under other functions in order to involve them in campaign work, thereby at least avoiding the declaration of expenditures through the pre-election fund. It is concerning that even in cases involving credible information confirmed by more than one source, it was not possible to obtain testimony from any injured person that would allow identification of the person. This demonstrates the vulnerability of labor rights, of employees under pressure, and the inadequacy of mechanisms for the protection of labor rights.

The Independent Observer’s concerns are on an entirely different level with respect to pressure exerted in the Russian Federation on ethnic Armenian businesspersons holding Armenian citizenship, as well as representatives of community and religious structures. The Independent Observer received numerous alerts and testimonies indicating that Russian security structures, as well as ethnic Armenian actors cooperating with those structures, threatened persons holding Armenian citizenship. These threats were framed in such a way that, if a “desired” result was not recorded in the elections to the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, negative consequences could follow concerning residence rights in the Russian Federation and the conditions for entrepreneurial activity. Persons in such a situation generally could not rely on legal protection without terminating their residence in the Russian Federation and returning to the Republic of Armenia.

Cases of Financial and Social Incentives Through Community Funds

There has been a noticeable increase in incentive payments, mainly in the form of bonuses, including cases of increases in allowances or salaries for community employees. Cases were also registered of one-time monetary social assistance being provided from community budget funds, such as the provision of social assistance in the amount of AMD 100,000 each by the head of the Talin community. In its final report, the Alliance will present a comprehensive analysis of budgetary expenditures and abuses of administrative resources concerning Shirak, Lori, and Tavush regions.

It is noteworthy that responses to criticism of this practice at the levels of municipalities and regional administrations were differentiated. Similar social expenditures by community heads representing different parties received different assessments. From the perspective of legal assessment, the Mission will pursue

legal accountability for community heads in certain obvious cases. In the context of the electoral process, it reaffirms its position: during the pre-election phase, increases in budgetary expenditures, repair works, social expenditures, or changes in their targeted purpose may be used as the provision of services under preferential conditions, that is, they may constitute disguised vote buying and must be excluded.

One of the most notable cases of creating favorable conditions for a party through decisions beneficial to a particular group of voters was the statement made by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan during a campaign meeting on easing the regime of deprivation of driving privileges. Before voting day, the proposal made by campaigner N. Pashinyan was included in the agenda of a government session and approved without broad public discussion.

Disproportionate Involvement of Police Forces

During pre-election gatherings held by various parties, a significant presence of law enforcement structures and police officers, as well as differentiated treatment, was recorded. The Independent Observer Alliance, as well as numerous other organizations and individuals, condemned the arrest and subsequent detention of opposition activist Artur Osipyan on hooliganism charges after his debate with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

On 20 May, during an action by the “I Am Against Everyone” initiative, the police intervened in the event by removing a citizen and confiscating the gate that served as the symbol of the party’s “Kick the Mouse” action. Calls to stop the action were also recorded, which led to short-term tension. The same party also alerted that the RA Police had taken the party’s campaign bus to a penalty area and did not return it for a prolonged period.

At the same time, cases are known in which the police were unable to ensure the unobstructed conduct of gatherings. The two most characteristic cases were the obstruction of a campaign event of the Strong Armenia Alliance in Masis community by the head of a territorial structure of the Yerkrpah Volunteer Union, and the obstruction of a Civil Contract Party event in Tashir community by supporters of the Strong Armenia Alliance. It should be recorded that, although such cases were isolated, they nevertheless cast a shadow from the perspective of an atmosphere of public solidarity and free political activity.

Testimonies Concerning Vote Buying

These elections were distinguished by an unprecedented number of vote-buying cases revealed by law enforcement bodies. Over four months, the Anti-Corruption Committee brought charges against more than 200 persons. Approximately 80 percent of the cases concerned the Strong Armenia Alliance, while some concerned the Armenia Alliance and the Prosperous Armenia Party.

Considering the latent nature of vote buying, the number of initiated cases, and the data that became known to the Independent Observer but still require verification, we are compelled to state that information and alerts concerning the use of vote buying indicate a large scale. At the same time, we record that, for the first time in the history of the Republic of Armenia, law enforcement bodies, represented by the newly established Anti-Corruption Committee, were making the necessary efforts to prevent and detect manifestations of vote buying.

Cases of Restriction and Obstruction of Observers’ Work

During the pre-election campaign, as well as during the preceding period, long-term observers faced a number of obstacles, mainly from the leading forces in the electoral contest: the Strong Armenia and Armenia alliances, the Prosperous Armenia Party, and the Civil Contract Party. It should be recorded that, thanks to the efforts of the Independent Observer, it was mostly possible to overcome the effects of distrust and non-transparent practices. Nevertheless, the threatening rhetoric toward observers and cases of

obstruction of their work by certain territorial structures of the Strong Armenia Alliance are condemnable. Taking into account the situation, the Alliance decided not to submit reports on these cases with the intention of not further inflaming the atmosphere in a politically polarized environment.

Cases in which various actors of the political process provided the Alliance with information about violations of their rights were expected, but unexpected in scale. Although this could have served as a positive example of cooperation with civil society, verification made it evident that a significant part of the information provided did not correspond to reality. Moreover, the incompleteness or baselessness of that information had been known from the outset to the very party reporting it.

Throughout the implementation of the observation mission, Daniel Ioannisyanyan, spokesperson of the Independent Observer Alliance, was targeted, with the aim of undermining trust in the findings and assessments of the observation mission.

Russian Interference

These elections to the National Assembly were also unprecedented in terms of the scale of interference by the Russian Federation. The interference was mainly manifested through four components:

1. Influence over the information environment through affiliated media outlets, opinion leaders, and other methods, by disseminating disinformation, manipulative information, false narratives, and by organizing other information operations.
2. The involvement of unlawful financing in favor of affiliated political forces.
3. Unlawful influence on voters who are citizens of the Republic of Armenia located in Russia.
4. Influence on public opinion in Armenia through economic sanctions.

At the same time, it is necessary to record that some of the actions in the information environment and actions aimed at disseminating false or polarizing narratives have Azerbaijani and Turkish, as well as European, origins. In terms of scale, these are incomparably smaller than the Russian narratives, but in substance they are equally subject to criticism.

Information interference of Russian origin almost exclusively targeted the ruling party, the government, and Nikol Pashinyan personally. Apart from the economic and social components of the campaign, the central themes included Armenia's security, sovereignty, and the peace process. A significant part of the opposition forces presented the peace process as the result of unilateral concessions, limitations on sovereignty, or an agreement achieved at the expense of national interests. In this context, narratives built around TRIPP, the "corridor," Syunik, and border security were actively used and were often presented within the framework of an existential threat.

One of the main narratives was the theme of "Western Azerbaijan" and the "return of 300,000 Azerbaijanis." This narrative presented the elections not only as political competition but as a struggle over demography, culture, and the preservation of identity. It became one of the most persistent and frequently repeated themes of the campaign, manifested not only in the discourse itself but also through visual content. In particular, artificial intelligence was widely used to advance this theme.

It is noteworthy that, according to a number of investigations, a significant part of the false and manipulative content disseminated by the "Matryoshka" network focused on shaping negative perceptions around the person of Nikol Pashinyan, his health condition, psychological stability, and decision-making capacity.

As election day approached, discussions concerning the legitimacy of the elections and post-election developments began to play a greater role in political discourse. Various political actors and media sources spoke about the use of administrative resources, possible electoral violations, challenges to the election results, and the likelihood of a post-election crisis. In the final days of the campaign, these such as “the authorities will not hand over power” and “if the authorities try to disregard the people’s vote” circulated more frequently. These narratives contributed to the formation of a background of post-election uncertainty and mistrust. The threatening letters received at the telephone number and email address of the Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly Vanadzor Office, a member of the Independent Observer Alliance, may also be classified within this group. [2]

Another feature of the campaign was the active presence of the theme of external influence. The question of choosing between the EU and the EAEU, statements by Russian officials, economic restrictions applied by Russia, as well as the activity of Western actors, particularly representatives of France and the United States, often became part of domestic political discussions. As a result, the elections were often presented not only as a process of forming a government but also as a choice regarding Armenia’s future geopolitical direction.

During monitoring, a significant circulation of disinformation and manipulative content was also recorded. This content mainly concerned security threats, the actions of external actors, electoral processes, and the activities of political opponents. Communication mechanisms based on fear, threat, and anxiety were widely used, and in a number of cases coordinated disinformation elements were recorded.

Overall, the 2026 election campaign formed a highly polarized information environment in which narratives built around security, identity, foreign policy orientation, and the legitimacy of the elections predominated. Political competition largely unfolded not at the level of political programs, but at the level of public perceptions, agendas, and emotional mobilization, which became one of the main characteristics of the campaign.

Automated networks of bots and fake users, as well as false letters and threats sent to target groups, played a major role in these information operations. The assessment of this influence and its mechanisms requires continued monitoring and will also be presented subsequently.

In parallel, actions involving discrimination against and instrumentalization of persons displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh constituted both an emotional and a legal issue. These actions were expressed both in the unacceptable vocabulary of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and in mutual accusations by opposing political poles. In the context of electoral rights, the issue of citizenship of the Republic of Armenia for persons displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh again intensified. Ten days before voting day, it became known that several persons displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh had restored their electoral rights through judicial proceedings. While a general demand and call was being formed to apply to the Migration and Citizenship Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and then to restore electoral rights through the courts, the Migration and Citizenship Service appealed the court decisions. The issue of citizenship of persons displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh is not unequivocal; however, it is obvious that, as a result of a campaign by certain political forces against its proper legal formulation, the number of persons who submitted applications for Armenian citizenship is low, while those speaking on behalf of stateless persons arbitrarily attribute them to specific political camps.

Election Day

On 7 June 2026, the Independent Observer Alliance carried out an observation mission throughout the entire territory of the Republic of Armenia.

Observation on election day was conducted through 259 mobile teams, 37 rapid response teams, and observation teams in all 38 Territorial Electoral Commissions. The observation teams were supported by 17 lawyers and 37 information operators, who verified reported data and coordinated the work of mobile observers through the review of broadcasts from precinct centers. For reporting observation data, observers used the Vote Monitor observation application developed by the Commit Global civil society organization. In cooperation with the legal and rapid response teams, the editorial team of the Fact Investigation Platform worked as well and carried out segmental monitoring of the day's news coverage.

Morning Session and Opening of Voting

The morning session was observed in 387 precincts, of which approximately 30 percent began late.

Procedural violations were recorded in approximately 7 percent of the observed precincts. At the same time, it should be recorded that in approximately 18 percent of precincts the commissions operated irregularly; the practice of failing to follow procedures continued in many precincts during voting and the vote count, which led to violations. During observation of the morning session, two cases of equipment malfunction were recorded.

When observers raised issues concerning the absence of posted informational materials, inconvenient furnishing, and risks to the secrecy of the voter's vote, the commissions were generally willing to remedy the situation.

Main Violations Recorded During Voting

During election day, the following violations were recorded in 844 of the 1,906 precincts visited, or 44.2 percent:

Procedural violations - 156 cases. The most common forms of procedural violations were violations of the procedure for maintaining the commission register, failure to explain the voting procedure to voters, shortages of unused ballots in the voting booth, corrections related to the signing of the voter list, and failure to stamp coupons.

Control-related violations - 121 cases. More than half of the violations related to control over voting were crowding; another third consisted of attempts at direct control of voting. Removal of ballots from the precinct and organized transportation of voters were less widespread, but noticeable.

Violations of the right or authority to be present in the voting room - 84 cases. Approximately 66 percent of these violations concerned proxies not wearing or presenting their certificates, or the presence of more than two proxies from each party, which is not permitted. It should be emphasized that 30 percent of these cases, 19 cases, were connected with proxies of Strong Armenia; 11 percent, seven cases, with Civil Contract; and 9.5 percent, six cases, with proxies of the Armenia Alliance.

Violations of secrecy - 122 cases. Of the attempts violating the secrecy of the vote, 53 percent were cases of open voting, another 14.4 percent involved announcing the vote aloud, 14.4 percent involved group voting, meaning more than one person, as well as a small number of cases of filming in the voting booth.

Campaigning - 59 cases, including 17 cases of wearing party symbols. In 16 of these cases, the matter concerned wearing a badge with the outline of the map of the Republic of Armenia.

Conflict situations - 78 cases. Observers assessed 19 of the recorded cases as provocations and 59 as disputes among voters, proxies, and members of electoral commissions.

In 14 cases, problems related to voter identification devices were recorded. Another 256 cases were classified as “other” and require further examination; however, according to preliminary examination, they do not constitute violations of the Electoral Code. No cases of electoral fraud were recorded.

Problems Recorded During the Vote Count

In 8 percent of the 391 observed precincts, the vote counting session was interrupted by an incident. In 26 precincts, the commissions invited persons who did not have the right to be present to leave the session. Cases of obstruction of entry were recorded in relation to observers of the Mission, but these cases were resolved quickly as a result of cooperation with the Territorial Electoral Commissions. Nevertheless, 49 cases were recorded in which the Precinct Electoral Commission prohibited the entry of persons who had the right to be present. This indicates the low competence of certain commission chairpersons, because of which the rights of persons entitled to be present are violated in every election. In 13 of the observed precincts, envelopes containing notes or other items, or ballots containing notes, were removed from the ballot box. There were no issues concerning the recognition of these ballots as valid or invalid. In 14 precincts, the procedure for determining invalid ballots was not preserved. In particular, commissions made different decisions regarding folded and partially torn ballots and, at times, did not properly invalidate envelopes in which any item other than one ballot of the established sample had been found. In 20 precincts, as a result of the count, the commissions did not receive a discrepancy among the number of coupons, voter signatures, and the figure recorded in the device, and they prepared protocols with inaccuracies.

In all observed precincts, proxies of various parties were present during the vote count; in only one case were only two political forces represented.

Problems Recorded During Acceptance of Sacks at Territorial Electoral Commissions

When conducting observation in the Territorial Electoral Commissions, the Independent Observer recorded that the large sack of voting materials from precinct centers was brought with violations in 1.5 percent of cases.

The small sack was submitted with violations in 2.35 percent of cases.

The two copies of the protocol were submitted with violations in 1.2 percent of cases. The register was not properly submitted in 0.6 percent of cases.

Although the number of problematic cases is negligible, it is again obvious that during the training of Precinct Electoral Commissions greater attention must be paid to the procedures for summarizing voting and counting votes.

Preliminary Results and Recount

The Territorial Electoral Commissions identified arithmetic inaccuracies in certain submitted protocols, and in some cases data were entered incorrectly at the Territorial Electoral Commissions. These errors are easily visible and identifiable because the sum of individual figures does not correspond to the total figure stated in the protocol. This suggests that the errors occurred as a result of negligence, rather than intentional falsification. However, in the context of discourse observed in recent days aimed at delegitimizing the elections, these individual shortcomings are being exploited and presented as evidence of widespread electoral fraud.

The high number of invalid ballots has also become a topic of manipulation. According to the preliminary results of the 2026 National Assembly elections, the number of invalid ballots exceeds 17,000. This figure is several times higher than those recorded in previous elections because, under the amendments adopted on 7 April 2026, a ballot of the established sample, meaning one bearing a stamp, is also considered invalid if

its envelope contains another item, including an unstamped ballot. This amendment was made in order to definitively exclude any attempt to control the voter's vote and to prevent the voter's vote from being attributed to any party other than the one for which the voter intended to vote. In the absence of a requirement to invalidate in cases where two ballots are present in the voting envelope, the result was that, irrespective of the voter's will, the ballot on which the stamp had happened to be affixed was considered valid.

At the Territorial Electoral Commissions, the Independent Observer observed the recount of all precincts and did not record any significant violations. The summary of that observation will be included in the final report.

Reports, Applications, and Other Correspondence

On election day, the lawyers of the Independent Observer public alliance provided more than 450 consultations.

Based on significant violations, 167 violation recording cards were prepared.

Many of the violations were resolved verbally, through the intervention of the observer and the lawyer, by the Precinct Electoral Commission or the Territorial Electoral Commission.

For unresolved issues, four reports on alleged crimes were prepared:

1. Violation of the secrecy of voting at precinct 23/30, under Article 215 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia.
2. Violation of the electoral rights of 19 military voters located at the Vanadzor Military Hospital as a result of voting by mobile ballot box at precinct 23/43. In particular, the representative of the Ministry of Defence incorrectly presented the number of conscript soldiers and then submitted a written request to the Territorial Electoral Commission to ensure the voting process for the soldiers left off the list. In fact, however, the soldiers were unable to vote.
3. The theft of items necessary for the proper organization of the electoral process. In particular, thousands of unused ballots disappeared from the safe at polling station 29/23.
4. In a number of precincts, envelopes were found whose paper density was so low that it was visible to the naked eye which ballot had been placed in the envelope. Already at 10:30 in the morning, the Independent Observer Alliance applied to the Central Electoral Commission, demanding that all such envelopes be urgently identified and replaced. The Alliance also submitted a report on an alleged crime concerning the transparency of the envelopes under the article concerning violation of the secrecy of voting. Because no response was received from the Central Electoral Commission regarding the transparent envelopes, and on the basis of continuing alerts concerning them, the Independent Observer Alliance was compelled to personally submit samples of the envelopes to the Central Electoral Commission so that the problem could be resolved urgently. The CEC accepted that there was a problem, also stating orally that the Tigran Mets printing house had ordered the envelopes from China. The CEC nevertheless did not provide a systemic solution to the problem.

Eight applications were also prepared for the Central Electoral Commission.

Three of the applications concerned crowding of military personnel at precincts 35/65, 20/56, and 10/51 as of 20:00. Through the applications, we requested the preparation of an administrative offense protocol under Article 40.15 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Armenia, for violating the rules on being present at a precinct center or in the area adjacent to a precinct center.

At the same time, we noted that the Central Electoral Commission should adopt a decision to hold repeat voting in individual electoral precincts, especially precinct 35/65.

Three of the applications submitted to the CEC concerned non-compliance with the requirements for the register and violations of the procedure for filling it out, under Article 40.6 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Armenia. For example, the morning sessions were not recorded, issues identified by an observer were not recorded, and incidents registered in the precinct were not recorded.

Two applications submitted to the CEC presented nine cases of campaigning on voting day, both by mass media and by voters. In particular, the mass media engaged in counter-campaigning, while violations by voters were manifested in wearing T-shirts and badges with party logos.

The Alliance demanded that protocols be drawn up and applied to the Administrative Court with a claim to impose liability. In some cases, the violation was eliminated on the spot after the observer appealed to the chairperson. With the same demand, the Alliance also applied to the Central Electoral Commission regarding one mass media outlet that had violated the rules of the day of silence.

In one case, on the basis of information disseminated on social networks, the Alliance applied to the Central Electoral Commission demanding that an observer from the Commonwealth of Independent States be deprived of accreditation for evident campaigning.

In one precinct, there were continuing cases of a public servant transporting citizens to the polling station in his car. After the Mission's observers pointed out the problem, police officers took measures to prevent the violation.

Preliminary Conclusions

The regular elections to the National Assembly, in which 18 political forces participated, took place in highly polarized and competitive conditions. Public interest in the elections was high, which was reflected in turnout that differed positively compared with the early elections of 2018 and 2021.

The 2026 regular elections were presented and perceived as a geopolitical choice for Armenia.

From the perspective of summarizing the pre-election activity of the ruling Civil Contract Party, it should be noted that administrative resources were used in order to gain an advantage in the elections, and the existing toolkit for combating their abuse is insufficient. In particular, as the Independent Observer has stated previously, it is necessary to ensure the possibility of fair and equal competition among the forces participating in elections over a longer period than only the pre-election campaign period defined by the current Electoral Code. This especially concerns changes in social policy at the state and community levels, which, although not considered vote buying or charity from the perspective of legislation, clearly create an initial advantage for one side.

In parallel, a large amount of credible information was disseminated, including findings made as a result of operative-investigative measures carried out by law enforcement bodies, concerning influence on voters' free expression of will and participation in gatherings through vote buying and charity.

The Independent Observer also considers foreign information manipulations and interference to be highly concerning. At this stage, their narratives were aimed at sowing public mistrust toward the elections and reinforcing the fatal and irreversible character of Armenia's geopolitical choice.

The Alliance is compelled to record that vote buying was of a mass nature and constituted one of the main mechanisms for collecting votes for certain political forces. It is concerning that the forces that, according to

the publications of the Anti-Corruption Committee, were beneficiaries of vote buying received a substantially higher number of votes than indicated by the results of credible and trustworthy sociological surveys.

We also consider it necessary to record the unprecedented initiative of law enforcement bodies in combating vote buying and the public accountability manifested through the publication of audio recordings immediately following all actions.

Improper electoral administration remains a matter of concern. Due to insufficient preparation of the chairpersons and members of Precinct Electoral Commissions, in certain precincts the competent and uninterrupted implementation of electoral procedures was not ensured, which would have guaranteed the normal conduct of voting.

The Alliance is also compelled to express concern that the Central Electoral Commission, contrary to constitutional regulations, does not in practice engage in oversight of the legality of elections, and the most significant issues affecting the elections did not receive the CEC's attention.

The purpose of the observation mission of the Independent Observer Alliance is to identify problems in legislation and law enforcement practice in electoral processes and to propose solutions that will contribute to the strengthening of democracy. In this respect, we consider particularly important the publication of the findings of the observation mission and their proper examination by law enforcement bodies.

The Independent Observer Alliance also considers it important to improve, as soon as possible, the regulations on transparency of political financing in order to protect future elections from unlawful manifestations.

Taking into account the records made by the Mission, the Alliance considers that the results recorded in the precincts reflect the votes cast by citizens; however, vote buying was of a mass nature, which negatively affected the quality of the elections.

The Alliance will separately present recommendations for a package of urgent legislative amendments to enter into force before the local self-government elections expected in the autumn, as well as recommendations concerning behavioral changes by electoral commissions and the public broadcaster.

Independent Observer Mission, represented by:

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly - Vanadzor

Union of Informed Citizens

"Direct Democracy" NGO

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