



Statement of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform

Holding 2016 parliamentary elections in a competitive, free and fair environment is crucial for Georgia's democratic development. Elections held with high standards will further reinforce Georgia's achievements and strengthen its European aspirations.

It is of utmost importance that pre-election environment is free of hate speech, aggression and violence. The Government must ensure peaceful and equal pre-election environment where the Constitution and laws are upheld, which in turn, establishes guarantees that the voters are able to freely express their electoral will. Additionally, all stakes-holders in the elections must refrain from violence. All must recognize the importance of holding elections in a peaceful and fair environment.

Violent developments during midterm local elections to municipal assemblies in Samegrelo region polling station # 53 have been particularly concerning. Unidentified persons, armed with clubs, physically abused the representatives of the "United National Movement", attacked journalists and interfered in their professional work.

It is particularly alarming that police was on the location, but they could prevent violence. Leaving the perpetrators of crime unpunished will count as facilitating and supporting violence. Therefore, the Government is lawfully bound to rapidly investigate this, and other potential crimes in an objective, and an unbiased manner. The Government must make sure crime perpetrators receive punishment in a lawful and legal manner. The Government, and every electoral party is also responsible to ensure that journalists, and other persons involved with the elections have safe and supporting working environment.

Within the context of the elections, the role of election monitoring bodies and missions is extremely important. It is vital these organizations have the possibility to observe pre-election period and election day in an environment that is safe, and free of direct or indirect pressure, and are able to freely inform local and international communities about the outcomes of their observation. Every political party, and actor must respect the role of the election monitoring organizations and missions, and understand that monitoring organizations represent public interest, they have the duty to support the requirements of the law are respected and that they are not interested in supporting or discrediting certain political parties.

Statement is adopted by the working group I of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform

We are confident that only unhindered support to these above listed principles will help Georgia hold 2016 parliamentary elections in a competitive, free and fair environment, and will further Georgia's democratic development and its European integration.

Signatory Organizations:

- 1. Georgian Young Lawyers' Association**
- 2. Transparency International - Georgia**
- 3. European Initiative - Liberal Academy Tbilisi**
- 4. Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters**
- 5. Local Democracy Agency (LDA)**
- 6. Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)**
- 7. Human Rights Center**
- 8. Youth Alternative**
- 9. Healthy World**
- 10. Public Advocacy**
- 11. Youth for Justice**
- 12. International Center for Civic Culture**
- 13. Tbilisi Human Rights House**
- 14. Article 42 of the Constitution**
- 15. Centre of Development and Democracy**
- 16. Open Society Georgia Foundation**
- 17. International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED)**
- 18. "School-Family-Society" Association**
- 19. Women's Initiatives Supporting Group**
- 20. Union "Anti-Violence Network of Georgia"**
- 21. United Public Movement "Multinational Georgia"**
- 22. People's Harmonious Development Society**
- 23. Georgian Association "Women in Business"**
- 24. Association "Imedi" - IPD Womens Peace Movement**
- 25. Research-Intellectual Club "Dialogue of Generations"**
- 26. Caucasian University Women**
- 27. Association "Atinati"**
- 28. Georgia Press Association**
- 29. Bridge of Friendship "Kartlosi"**
- 30. Civil Society and Democracy Development Center**

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- 31. Caucasian House Georgia**
- 32. Georgian Institute of Politics**
- 33. Association "Merkuri"**
- 34. Georgian Trade Unions Confederation**
- 35. Healthy Children**
- 36. Journalism Resource Center**
- 37. Teachers' Union "Education and Universe"**
- 38. Civil Council on Defense and Security Issues**
- 39. The Greens Movement of Georgia**
- 40. Women Enterprise" Fund Georgia**
- 41. Partnership for Road Safety**
- 42. Association for the Farmers' Rights Defence**
- 43. Junior Achievement Georgia**
- 44. Young socialists of Georgia**
- 45. International Fund of Sustainable Development**