ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION
OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF TURKIC STATES
Early parliamentary elections, Republic of Azerbaijan
1 September 2024

STATEMENT

Following the invitation from the Milli Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Election Observation Mission (*hereinafter referred to as the Mission*) of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States (TURKPA) conducted a short-term monitoring of the early parliamentary elections held in the Republic of Azerbaijan on 1 September 2024. The Mission was composed of the members and representatives of the parliaments of Kazakhstan and Türkiye, as well as the representatives of the TURKPA Secretariat.

The early parliamentary elections of 1 September 2024 were the first parliamentary elections held in all sovereign territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Parliamentary elections in the Republic of Azerbaijan are primarily regulated by the Constitution and the Election Code as well as regulations of the Central Election Commission (CEC). The Election Code is detailed and regulates all elections and referenda. Azerbaijan is a party to main international and regional human rights and election-related instruments.

Azerbaijan has a 125-member unicameral parliament. Members of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan are elected for a five-year term by a simple majority in 125 single-mandate constituencies.

The elections were administered by the CEC, 125 Constituency Election Commissions (ConECs) and 6,343 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs) functioning on permanent basis. Additional PECs also were established on temporary basis. Out-of-country voting is not conducted in parliamentary elections.

All election commissions are permanent bodies. CEC, ConECs and PECs have 18, 9 and 6 members respectively elected/appointed for a five-year term. All members of the CEC are elected by the Parliament. The CEC appoints members of the ConECs, which in their turn, appoint members of respective PECs. Three equal quotas are reserved for members representing parliamentary majority, parliamentary minority and parliamentarians elected as independent candidates at all election commissions. Chairs of election commissions represent the parliamentary majority, while each of two secretaries represent the parliamentary minority and parliamentarians elected as independent candidates.

The CEC is responsible for overall preparation and conduct of elections and referenda, providing guidance for the activities of lower-level commissions. The CEC plays a key role at all stages of electoral process. 4 of 18 members of the CEC were women.

ConECs manage the electoral process and determine the results of voting within their territories. PECs approve and update voter lists, conduct voting and determine results of voting at polling stations.

Voter registration is passive. Citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan at least 18 years of age have the right to vote, except those who have been declared legally incapable by a court decision. Stateless persons who have resided permanently in Azerbaijan for at least 5 years, also have the right to vote. According to the CEC, voter lists included 6,421,960 voters eligible to participate in the elections.

Citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan eligible to take part in the elections have the right to be elected as the member of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Persons who hold dual citizenship, have liabilities before other states and a prior conviction for a serious crime, serve in executive and judicial branches, are engaged in other paid activities, except for scientific, pedagogical and creative activities, have been declared legally incapable by a court decision, are serving sentences in places of deprivation of liberty by court decision, religious figures cannot stand as candidates in parliamentary elections.

Candidates can be nominated by political parties and their coalitions, a group of voters or through self-nomination. Prospective candidate must be supported by at least 450 signatures of voters collected from the constituency where he/she is nominated. A voter can sign in support of more than one candidate. A person can stand as a candidate in only one constituency. A candidate can withdraw from the contest until 10 days prior to election day. Until the end of the registration stage, 1,052 candidates were registered for the early parliamentary elections.

Pre-election campaigning starts 23 days prior to the election day and ends 24 hours before the start of voting. Campaigning is prohibited on election day and the day preceding it.

The legislation ensures equal campaign opportunities for all contestants. Pre-election campaigning may be carried out by registered candidates, their authorized representatives and proxies, parties or coalitions of parties that nominated the registered candidates, their authorized representatives and proxies through mass media, public events and distribution of printed, audio-visual and other campaign materials. Printed and audio-visual campaign materials shall contain information about the organizations that made the order and prepared these materials, circulation and date of release.

The legislation guarantees freedom of expression, media freedom and the right of access to information. Media must provide equal conditions for all candidates.

The legislation provides for observation by citizens and international observers. Domestic observers may conduct observation on own initiative or on the initiative of registered candidates, political parties, political party coalitions and non-governmental organizations functioning in the field of elections. International observers as well as domestic observers applied to conduct observation in the entire territory of the country are accredited by the CEC. ConECs accredit domestic observers who wish to conduct observation in polling stations in their respective territories.

Within its observation program, the TURKPA Mission held meetings with Mr. Mazahir Panahov, Chairman of the CEC of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Mr. Samir Sharifov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan. During the meetings, the Mission was informed on preparations for the early parliamentary elections.

On the election day, the Mission visited polling stations in Baku, Shamakhi and Gobustan. Members of the Mission observed the voting process starting from the opening of polling stations till the counting of votes. The Mission monitored the conduct of the elections, conversed with voters, domestic observers and polling stations' officials on the ground.

Polling stations were open from 08:00 till 19:00 on the election day. Election day was peaceful and orderly. The Mission assessed the overall voting process positively in the polling stations observed, characterizing it as transparent and well-organized. The Mission notes the presence of domestic observers in the polling stations observed that contributed to the ensuring of a high level of transparency. According to the preliminary information of the CEC, voter turnout for the elections was approximately 37.27%.

The Mission notes that election administration bodies were well-resourced and conducted preparations for the elections efficiently. The Mission commends the work of the CEC on training of participants of the electoral process and raising public awareness on the process.

The Mission positively notes the measures to facilitate participation and ensure the electoral rights of voters with disabilities, which include equipment of polling stations with Braille stencils and ramps, assisted voting by a person of choice and mobile ballot boxes for the voters unable to vote at the polling stations on the voting day.

The Mission highly appreciates the legal and logistical conditions provided for international observation of the elections in Azerbaijan.

In its activity, the Mission followed the objectivity, justness, transparency and impartiality principles in accordance with the TURKPA Regulations “On Election Observation” and relevant international instruments.

The Mission concludes that the early parliamentary elections in the Republic of Azerbaijan of 1 September 2024 were held in compliance with the national legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan and international election standards.