



INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION Armenia – Parliamentary Elections, 7 June 2026

STATEMENT OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

The 7 June 2026 parliamentary elections offered voters a genuine choice among political alternatives in a well-run process. Direct pressure from abroad in the form of escalating trade restrictions and security threats during the campaign, aimed at unduly influencing voters in favour of opposition forces, was observed. The campaign was highly confrontational with divisive rhetoric and marked by allegations of vote-buying and other electoral violations that led to numerous criminal proceedings of opposition candidates and activists, resulting in many opposition supporters refraining from actively engaging in the campaign. This, along with pressure on public sector employees to attend ruling party events, and recently introduced social and economic measures, raised concerns about the equality of opportunity to campaign. The legal framework provides a sound basis for democratic elections and the election administration enjoyed stakeholders' trust. Insufficient oversight and regulation of campaign finances limited transparency and opportunity for public scrutiny. Voters' access to impartial and reliable information was negatively impacted by the polarized media environment, biased media coverage, and a divisive online campaign with the use of manipulative content. Election day proceedings were assessed overwhelmingly positively in the vast majority of polling stations observed.

The elections took place in a pluralistic and highly polarized environment. Political debate centred on divisive narratives around peace-or-war, the implementation of the Agreement on Establishment of Peace and Inter-state Relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the ongoing constitutional reform, and competing views on the country's future geopolitical orientation. Ahead of the elections, this division was exploited as a basis for direct pressure and foreign interference, with Russian Federation officials threatening economic and security consequences should Armenia decide on closer EU ties. This came against the background of earlier reports of increases in hybrid threats and coordinated foreign influence operations targeting Armenia. The context was further polarized by tensions between the government and the leadership of the Armenian Apostolic Church, as well as criminal proceedings, including pre-trial detentions, against several prominent opposition and religious figures, aimed *inter alia* at protecting the constitutional order against the forcible seizure of power.

The elections were held under a revised legal framework that provides a sound basis for democratic elections and addresses several prior ODIHR and European Commission for Democracy through Law of the Council of Europe (Venice Commission) recommendations. The majority of amendments were adopted following extensive public consultations between 2021 and 2024, while some additional changes in 2026 were introduced with limited consultations, in an expedited procedure, and without broad cross-party support, including a few adopted after the elections had been called, at odds with OSCE commitments and international good practice. Most of these amendments improved the legal framework, but some gaps and ambiguities persist in the legislation, and a number of ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations remain unaddressed.

The election administration managed technical preparations professionally and efficiently, and enjoyed stakeholders' trust in its technical capacity. Sessions of the Central Election Commission (CEC) and Territorial Election Commissions (TECs) were generally open to observers, and broadcast online, with relevant decisions promptly published, contributing to transparency. In some cases, limited substantive deliberations detracted from the transparency of decision-making. The election administration made

significant steps to improve the training of Precinct Election Commission (PEC) members and conducted comprehensive voter education, whose visibility varied. Despite efforts to improve overall accessibility of the process, many polling stations remained inaccessible for voters with disabilities.

The final voter register included 2,503,976 voters. Voter registration was generally inclusive and enjoyed public confidence, and voters had ample opportunities to verify their data and request corrections. While some 20,101 recently naturalized displaced Armenian refugees were added to voter lists prior to the elections, a further 6,000 applications remained pending by election day, attributed by some stakeholders to slow and bureaucratic procedures, leaving those applicants without the possibility to vote. Contrary to international standards and despite previous ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations, citizens declared incompetent by a court decision were deprived of their right to vote.

Candidate registration was conducted in an inclusive and open manner. However, restrictions on dual citizens and the related criminalization, as well as the lengthy residency and language requirements are at odds with Council of Europe and other international standards as well as good practice. Individual candidacies are not permitted, contrary to OSCE commitments. Following withdrawals, including one entire candidate list, 18 contestants (16 parties and two alliances) and 1,938 candidates were registered to contest the elections.

The campaign was vibrant and largely peaceful but highly polarized and confrontational, with repeated use of inflammatory rhetoric, including by the ruling party lead candidate. It centred on messages of peace, relations with Azerbaijan, regional stability, economy, and anti-corruption, with several foreign leaders making public interventions and endorsements in favour of the ruling party. Direct pressure from the Russian Federation in the shape of escalating trade restrictions and threats to the future economic stability and security of the nation linked to the outcome of the election featured throughout the campaign. The ODIHR EOM did not observe systematic misuse of administrative resources at the local level but it did observe and receive multiple allegations, some of which it assessed as credible, regarding pressure on voters to attend ruling party campaign events. This, together with recently introduced or initiated social and economic measures, benefited the ruling party and undermined the equality of opportunity to campaign, at odds with OSCE commitments. At the same time, a few allegations pointed to pressure on voters exercised by some economic actors on behalf of opposition parties. There were numerous allegations of vote-buying and other electoral violations, which the authorities proactively investigated. However, the focus of these investigations on supporters and candidates from the main opposition parties led to the perception of selective enforcement and concerns about the impact on campaign opportunities and participation.

Online campaigning was extensive and its regulation is confined to labelling requirements for campaign content and paid political advertising, limiting opportunities for transparency and oversight. The online campaign was confrontational and divisive, and marked by contestants' mutual accusations of links to foreign powers. Some candidates and third-party accounts disseminated AI-generated manipulative content to discredit opponents, which was further circulated and amplified online. The ODIHR EOM noted manipulative and false content disseminated by inauthentic accounts to discredit the government and the electoral process, although this did not feature prominently in the campaign debate. This is consistent with the findings of multiple fact-checking organizations which identified an increase in coordinated disinformation operations originating from abroad. Overall, the authorities took notable steps to enhance their preparedness and interinstitutional and intergovernmental cooperation and to report issues to platforms, but the transparency and effectiveness of these efforts were limited by the lack of publicly available information on identified disinformation and the actions taken to address it.

Despite gender quotas for the election administration and parliament, as well as financial incentives for parties maintaining gender-balanced governing bodies, women's participation in public and political life remained low. In line with the requirement that at least 30 per cent of candidates on each list be from either gender, women comprised 37.3 per cent of candidates, but none of the candidate lists were headed by a woman.

Amendments to the legal framework for campaign finance expanded the definition of campaign expenditure, increased donation and expenditure limits and redistributed oversight competences. Still, a number of gaps remain in regulatory scope and implementation, limiting transparency, accountability and integrity of party and campaign finance. Substantial pre-campaign expenditures remained outside reporting requirements and expenditure limits; third-party campaigning was unregulated; and regulations on cash donations did not ensure traceability. While donations from legal entities, as well as foreign and anonymous sources are prohibited, corporate sponsorships of high-cost events promoting ruling party policies raised concerns about intertwined business and political interests. The Oversight and Audit Service and the Corruption Prevention Commission received bank statements and published contestants' reports, but the information was not searchable or user-friendly, limiting public scrutiny. During the campaign, the Anti-Corruption Committee investigated party-linked charitable foundations and party donors. However, the absence of legally prescribed criteria for selecting those subject to investigation raised concerns about the potential for a selective and politically motivated approach.

The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and freedom of the media. The media environment is pluralistic, but remains polarized and constrained by a shrinking and narrowly concentrated advertising market, which undermines financial sustainability and exposes media outlets to political influence, while legal requirements for transparency of media ownership remain insufficient. Although defamation and libel are decriminalized, in the pre-electoral period, a number of journalists faced civil defamation lawsuits, verbal attacks, threats and obstruction, with negative effects for the environment for political reporting. The ODIHR EOM media monitoring found that most outlets were instrumentalized by contestants to amplify mutual insults and divisive campaign rhetoric, offering little substantive analysis of contestants' platforms. The public television complied with its legal obligation to provide each contestant with 90 minutes of free airtime, but it also displayed clear bias in favour of the ruling party, contrary to its legal obligations and public mandate. Several private outlets portrayed the government negatively and provided favourable coverage to selected opposition contestants. All combined, this undermined voters' opportunity to make an informed choice.

The dispute resolution framework provides for effective administrative and judicial review, but standing remains unduly narrow, at odds with international good practice and prior ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations. The CEC adjudicated five complaints in public sessions and in a transparent manner, all of which were rejected. Fifty-seven appeals were filed with the Administrative Court, which reviewed most cases in public sessions, within legal deadlines and in a transparent manner.

The legislation provides for citizen and international observation, as well as observation by contestant representatives. The CEC registered 13 citizen observer groups and 8 international observer organizations, contributing to transparency. While recent legal amendments aimed at preventing party-affiliated organizations from observing were generally supported by citizen observers, concerns persisted that some registered groups remained affiliated with contestants.

Election day was orderly and calm, despite several criminal charges and investigations related to electoral offences reported by the authorities. Opening and voting were assessed positively in the vast majority of observations. PECs generally followed procedures, and voter identification devices functioned effectively. Women were well represented in PECs, including in chairperson positions;

however, accessibility remained a significant concern. The process was generally transparent and efficient, although affected in some polling stations by overcrowding, inadequate layouts, isolated procedural errors, and interference by contestant proxies. Vote secrecy was generally respected, with some compromises mainly linked to insufficient voter understanding and overcrowding. Closing and counting were positively assessed, with occasional procedural inconsistencies. Citing cyber security concerns, the CEC instructed TECs to limit access to observers during the data entry of results in 11 of 38 TECs, detracting from the transparency of the process.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Background and Political Context

The 7 June 2026 parliamentary elections were called by the President of Armenia on 6 February. The Civil Contract Party, led by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, has held a parliamentary majority since 2018.¹ The elections took place in a highly polarized and emotionally charged environment, further exacerbated by competing narratives around peace-or-war, and linked to regional developments and the peace process with Azerbaijan. In August 2025, the two countries initialled an Agreement on Establishment of Peace and Inter-state Relations, which establishes a framework for the normalization of relations.² Questions related to the ratification and implementation of the peace agreement continued to have a major effect on the political debate and remained central to the ongoing constitutional reform.³

The broader context was also marked by tensions between the government and the leadership of the Armenian Apostolic Church,⁴ and criminal charges and arrests of several former officials, Church leaders and prominent opposition figures, including the current leader of Strong Armenia.⁵ The authorities declared the cases mainly aimed at preventing corruption or protecting the constitutional order against forcibly seizing power, while the opposition and some civil society organizations

¹ The Civil Contract Party held 69 of the 107 seats in the outgoing parliament. The opposition was comprised of the Armenia Alliance, with 28 seats, and With Honour Alliance, with 6 seats. The remaining four seats were held by representatives of national minorities.

² See [agreement initialled on 8 August 2025](#) and the related [Joint Declaration](#).

³ Constitutional reform discussions began in 2020. Following the initialling of the August 2025 agreement, [Azerbaijan](#) conditioned its implementation on the removal of constitutional references it considered territorial claims. In response, the Armenian [Prime Minister](#) and [Foreign Minister](#) noted that the constitutional reform was an internal matter but also expressed support for a Constitution without the disputed text. In March 2026, the [Minister of Justice](#) stated that the draft Constitution had been finalized and would include significant changes, including further decentralization, a stronger judiciary, and additional oversight mechanisms for the executive and the prime minister. The Prime Minister declared that a constitutional referendum was [planned](#) for 2027.

⁴ After the November 2020 ceasefire agreement with Azerbaijan, Catholicos Karekin II [called](#) for the Prime Minister's resignation, citing the government's alleged failure to protect national interests; similar calls were reiterated after the September 2023 ceasefire agreement. In [May 2024](#), mass anti-government protests led by some senior clerics took place, after which numerous people were detained. In [June 2025](#), senior clergymen and opposition representatives were arrested and prosecuted on various grounds, with proceedings continuing until [January 2026](#). In [February 2026](#), criminal charges were brought and a travel ban was imposed on the Catholicos; these were [annulled](#) by the court in April. In January 2026, the Prime Minister, together with several clergymen, [called](#) for the Catholicos's resignation and launched a campaign for church reform. The Church, supported by several opposition parties (Strong Armenia, Armenia Alliance, Prosperous Armenia and Wings of Unity) has [criticized](#) the move as undermining its constitutionally protected status.

⁵ Following statements in support of the Church, Samvel Karapetyan, who later established Strong Armenia, was arrested in [June 2025](#) on [charges](#) of publicly calling for the seizure of power; additional charges for tax evasion and money laundering were [brought](#) in October. In December 2025, he [was placed](#) under house arrest, which [was extended](#) in April 2026 for three months. Other prominent criminal investigations initiated before the announcement of elections include those against two former presidents and current party leaders, [Robert Kocharyan](#) and [Serzh Sargsyan](#), as well as the [former mayor of Yerevan](#) and the [previous](#) and [acting](#) mayors of Gyumri.

condemned them as politically motivated and alleged that they led to an atmosphere of fear. In recent years, a number of international and domestic human rights organizations have reported a decline in respect for the fundamental freedoms of expression and assembly, and raised concerns about the excessive use of pre-trial detention, insufficient investigation of police abuse and the diminishing of judicial independence.⁶

Regional developments since 2023 have accelerated Armenia's geopolitical re-orientation.⁷ While several political parties favour maintaining or strengthening strategic partnership with the Russian Federation, the government and some parties advocate for a re-balancing of foreign policy based on closer ties with the European Union (EU) and the United States (US), and normalization of relations with neighbouring countries. This division was exploited as a basis for direct pressure and foreign interference, with Russian Federation officials threatening economic and security consequences and adopting trade restrictions affecting Armenian exports.⁸ Over the past years, the authorities have reported an increase in hybrid threats and coordinated foreign influence operations targeting Armenia, and raised concerns that such instances would become more widespread as elections approached.⁹

Despite some progress resulting from gender quotas in election administration and in parliament, and financial incentives for parties maintaining gender-balanced governing bodies, women's participation in public and political life remains low.¹⁰ Four out of 12 government ministers and 39 per cent of the outgoing members of parliament (MPs) are women; there are no women provincial governors. None of the parties running for the elections were led by a woman.

⁶ See the 2025 United Nations (UN) Human Rights Committee [report](#) on Armenia and the 2026 Human Rights Watch [report](#). In [2024](#) and [2025](#), the Office of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia identified systemic violations of the right to freedom of assembly, including mass arrests, procedural irregularities and disproportionate use of force by police. In 2026, Amnesty International [reported](#) excessive use of force during public demonstrations and a lack of police accountability, and raised concerns about the recently adopted 2025 [amendments to the Law on Police](#), which allowed the police to use a wide range of surveillance methods, such as live feeds from cameras fitted in public spaces, transport hubs and public buildings, which it stated were “having a chilling effect and resulting in violations of the rights to privacy, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom from discrimination”. In [2025](#), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) noted that “The President and Parliament have continued to influence judicial appointments and promotions. [...] There is an urgent need to clearly define the legal grounds for judicial disciplinary liability, especially those affecting judges’ freedom of expression, and to ensure sanctions are proportionate, with dismissal of judges used in practice as a last resort”.

⁷ Armenia halted its participation in the Moscow-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in February 2024, although it has not formally withdrawn. The EU [deployed](#) a civilian mission to contribute to stability in the border areas in January 2023; the parliament adopted the [EU Integration Act](#) in March 2025 and an [agenda](#) for the EU–Armenia Strategic Partnership in December 2025. In April 2026, EU established a [Partnership Mission](#) in Armenia to enhance resilience and crisis management. In May 2026, following a [European Political Community](#) meeting, the first [Armenia–EU Summit](#) took place in Yerevan.

⁸ Several Russian Federation state officials, including the [President](#), the [Minister of the Foreign Affairs](#) and the [Deputy Prime Minister](#) called on the Armenian authorities to “decide between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)”, and while emphasizing the countries’ structural integration, warned of the consequences of possible decoupling. Previously, during Prime Minister Pashinyan’s April visit to Moscow, the President of the Russian Federation [referred](#) to “special relations” between the two countries, and raised concerns that some Armenian politicians with pro-Russian positions were in detention.

⁹ See the 2026 Armenian Foreign Intelligence Service [External Security Risks Report](#) and the [Armenia Cybersecurity Threat Landscape](#) report by CyberHUB–AM.

¹⁰ Eighty per cent of the public funding to political parties is allocated based on the number of votes obtained. An additional 20 per cent is allocated as follows: a party obtains half of it if women in the governing body of the party exceed 40 per cent; one quarter of it, if women constitute 20–40 per cent; if women are less than 20 per cent, the party does not receive this part of the funding. In addition, a party obtains half of the additional funding if it has branches across Armenia and one quarter if it has branches in at least half of the regions of Armenia.

Legal Framework and Electoral System

The elections were held under a revised legal framework that provides a sound basis for conducting democratic elections.¹¹ Since the last elections, the legal framework has undergone significant amendments, addressing a number of prior ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations on the misuse of administrative resources, strengthening sanctions for pressure on voters and vote-buying, and election-related criminal offences, and improving accessibility of the electoral process for voters with disabilities. The May 2021 amendments revised rules on campaign finance, media coverage of contestants, voter and candidate registration, ballot validity, and gender quota and related seat allocation. Amendments adopted in July 2022 extended the use of video recording of voting and tabulation, introduced stricter requirements for TEC membership, and regulated the naming of political party alliances. Revisions in December 2024 further addressed candidate deregistration, permissible campaign materials, equality of campaigning, accessibility, recounts, and campaign finance oversight. These amendments were adopted through open, inclusive and participatory processes. However, in some instances, the frequency and complexity of the amendments resulted in drafting inconsistencies.¹²

Two further sets of amendments were adopted in January and April 2026 in an expedited procedure, with limited consultations and without broad cross-party support.¹³ Further, the April amendments were adopted after the elections had been called, at odds with international good practice, leaving some alliances with limited time to bring their registration applications into compliance with the newly adopted regulations.¹⁴

Overall, the legal framework provides an adequate basis for the conduct of democratic elections. The recent amendments introduced several improvements, but some gaps and ambiguities remain in the legislation.¹⁵ Moreover, several ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations remain unaddressed, including those related to restrictions on voting rights on the basis of mental disability, protection of voters' personal data, candidacy rights of dual citizens, transparency of campaign finance and of media ownership, effective measures against inflammatory rhetoric, the extension of the deadline for recounts, the right to seek effective legal remedy, and restrictions on the accreditation of new observer organizations.

¹¹ Parliamentary elections are regulated by the 1995 Constitution, the 2016 Electoral Code, the 2016 Law on Political Parties and other legislation, supplemented by decisions of the Central Election Commission (CEC).

¹² The 2024 amendments amended, reformulated, or repealed many provisions introduced in 2021 and 2022, to address gaps that emerged in the 2021 elections and related ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations; see also the 2021 ODIHR and Venice Commission [Joint Urgent Opinion](#) and the 2023 ODIHR and Venice Commission [Joint Opinion](#) on draft amendments to the Electoral Code and related legislation.

¹³ The January amendments introduced additional accreditation requirements for citizen observers and empowered the CEC to revoke accreditations for certain violations. The April amendments clarified ballot validity rules and reinstated the ban on personal names in alliance names, adopted in 2022 and repealed in 2024 due to drafting errors, whereby an entire paragraph was deleted instead of only the intended sentence.

¹⁴ Strong Armenia had initially submitted its registration request as “Strong Armenia with Samvel Karapetyan” but was required to modify its application. See also Section II.B.6.A. of the Venice Commission’s 2024 [Revised Interpretative Declaration on the Stability of Electoral Law](#), which states that “once elections have been called, no amendments to electoral law should be made, unless they are strictly necessary to comply with binding decisions by national constitutional courts or supreme courts with equivalent jurisdiction, or by international courts”.

¹⁵ The law does not sufficiently regulate third-party and online campaigning, establish clear and proportionate CEC sanctions for campaign-related violations, and prescribe procedures for CEC consideration of requests by the Prosecutor General to initiate criminal prosecution against candidates. While the law prohibits certain categories of party and alliance names, it does not explicitly provide that violation of this prohibition constitutes grounds for refusing registration. In addition, provisions on violations that may lead to the de-registration of candidate lists or termination of PEC and TEC members' powers remain vague.

Voters elect at least 101 members of parliament (MPs) and four national minority representatives through a closed-list proportional system in a single nationwide constituency.¹⁶ The May 2021 amendments lowered the threshold for seat allocation to 4 per cent for parties while increasing it to 8 and 10 per cent for alliances consisting of up to three parties or more than four parties, respectively, despite ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations to align the alliance threshold with that for parties.¹⁷ The Constitution requires a stable parliamentary majority to form a government, defined as 52 per cent of seats. If a contestant wins an absolute majority of seats but falls short of this threshold, it receives additional mandates to reach it. Otherwise, a coalition must be formed within 14 days or a second round is held 35 days after election day between the two leading lists, with additional seats awarded to the winner.

Election Administration

The elections were administered by a three-tiered system comprising the CEC, 38 Territorial Election Commissions (TECs), and 2,005 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs).¹⁸ The CEC and most TECs fulfilled the legal gender quota requirements, although women remained under-represented in leadership positions.¹⁹ The election administration managed technical preparations in a professional and efficient manner, and enjoyed the confidence of most stakeholders, including political parties, in its technical capacity. At the same time, some opposition and civil society representatives raised concerns regarding the independence of the CEC and TECs, citing the appointment process of its members.²⁰

The CEC, responsible for the oversight of the entire electoral process, held regular sessions, which were generally open to observers, proxies, candidates and the media, and were livestreamed and recorded, contributing to transparency. However, agendas were often announced only shortly before sessions, at times less than one hour in advance, and in some cases, CEC members appeared to have reached agreement before the formal session, leading to limited substantive deliberation and reducing the transparency and accountability of decision-making.

TECs supervised the appointment and work of PECs, set up the polling stations in co-operation with local authorities, and conducted training for lower-level commissions. In line with recent legal amendments, all TEC members have undergone attestation and training. During the election period, TEC sessions were broadcast online and their decisions posted on the CEC website. PECs, responsible for the conduct of election-day operations, were comprised of eight members: two appointed by each of the current three parliamentary factions and two by the respective TECs.²¹ Most PECs were formed

¹⁶ The law provides for up to four reserved seats in parliament, one for each of the four largest national minorities (Yezidis, Russians, Assyrians and Kurds), in proportion to votes cast for parties passing the threshold.

¹⁷ See paragraphs 45-51 of the 2021 [Joint Opinion on the Electoral Code](#), where ODIHR and the Venice Commission advised against raising the thresholds for alliances without justification. Also see the April 2016 ODIHR and Venice Commission [Joint Opinion](#) on the draft Electoral Code, which stated that “alliances might provide more cooperation and stable government [...] therefore, the threshold for alliances could be the same as for political parties”.

¹⁸ The CEC has seven members elected by parliament with a three-fifth majority for six-year terms, renewable once. TECs are permanent bodies composed of seven members, appointed by the CEC for a six-year term.

¹⁹ The law requires that each gender be represented by at least three members of the CEC and TECs. Four CEC members and 46 per cent of TEC members were women. While women accounted for some 87 per cent of TEC secretaries, they held only 16 per cent of chairperson and deputy chairperson positions. Three TECs, appointed before the introduction of more stringent gender quotas in election administration, had only two women members each. Gender-disaggregated data on PEC members was not available before election day.

²⁰ CEC members were appointed by the parliamentary majority; some ODIHR EOM interlocutors also raised concerns on the prior affiliation of the CEC chairperson with Civil Contract Party. Many TEC members are civil servants.

²¹ PEC chairperson and secretary positions were distributed among parliamentary factions by the CEC according to a formula based on the number of seats held by each party in the parliament, the number of available positions and the number of precincts. In the event that political parties failed to submit nominations, the TEC appointed members from a roster of certified applicants.

by TECs by the legal deadline of 13 May, with a limited number of delays caused by some contestants not nominating sufficient members.

Positively, the establishment of new Training and TEC Relations departments within the CEC strengthened the preparation of lower-level commissions and improved internal communication. As part of the efforts, the CEC also introduced a training of trainers for TEC members to support PEC capacity building. PEC trainings covered election-day procedures and those observed were generally assessed by ODIHR EOM LTOs as comprehensive and interactive. PEC replacements appointed after the completion of training sessions on 3 June received written training materials and instructions.²²

The CEC conducted detailed voter education on voter registration, the electoral system and voting procedures, mainly through media appearances, online materials and brochures, some of which were provided in accessible formats, for example with sign language interpretation, audio, easy-to-read format, closed captioning and Braille. While efforts were wide-ranging overall, their visibility varied across the country. In some areas, civil society organizations conducted complementary voter education activities.²³ The CEC also took steps to improve accessibility, and voters could request temporary registration at accessible polling stations. However, many polling stations remained inaccessible which, combined with a lack of available alternative voting methods, continued to hinder the independent participation of persons with disabilities (see also *Election Day*).²⁴

Voter Rights and Registration

Citizens at least 18 years of age on election day have the right to vote, except those serving a sentence for a serious crime. Contrary to international standards and despite previous ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations, citizens declared incompetent by a court decision are disenfranchised.²⁵ Voter registration is passive and continuous. The voter register is maintained by the Migration and Citizenship Service (MCS), based on data from the State Population Register, and includes citizens with permanent residence who held a valid identification document at any point during the six months preceding election day.

In the lead-up to the elections, precinct-level voter lists were displayed at polling stations and published online in a downloadable and searchable format. Voters were provided ample opportunities to request corrections and inclusion both online and in-person at MCS offices. By the 26 May deadline, 22,734 voters requested temporary inclusion at another location.²⁶ Eligible voters could also be added to supplementary voter lists on election day, provided that they proved their right to vote. By law, out-of-

²² ODIHR EOM LTOs attended some 40 training sessions. The methodology and approach were standardized, although observers noted some differences in the level of interaction.

²³ For instance, *Menq* and Youth Initiatives Centre conducted awareness-raising activities for first-time voters; Mission Armenia, Disability Rights Agenda and *Lusastgh* provided information to voters with disabilities; RESTART organized youth camps and a social media campaign targeting young voters; Women's Rights Center focused on empowering women voters; and PINK Armenia focused on the political engagement of LGBTI voters.

²⁴ According to the CEC, 31 per cent of polling stations were accessible to persons with disabilities affecting mobility.

²⁵ See Articles 12 and 29 of the UN [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD). Paragraph 48 of the 2014 [General Comment No. 1 to the CRPD](#) states that "a person's decision-making ability cannot be a justification for any exclusion of persons with disabilities from exercising their political rights, including the right to vote [and] the right to stand for election".

²⁶ Special voter lists were compiled for voters in penitentiary facilities, detention centres, military and medical facilities. Mobile voting was organised in medical facilities and pre-trial detention centres.

country voting online was available only to diplomatic and military personnel and their family members abroad, a total of 537 persons.²⁷

Most IEOM interlocutors expressed confidence in the accuracy of the voter lists. The final number of registered voters was 2,503,976. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) informed the ODIHR EOM that some 20,101 recently naturalized Armenian refugees had been added to voter lists ahead of election day. However, a further 6,000 applications remained pending by election day, leaving the applicants without the possibility to vote. Some ODIHR EOM interlocutors attributed the pending applications to a slow and bureaucratic naturalization process.²⁸

After election day, signed voter lists, except those from military facilities, detention centres and penitentiaries, will be published online. Notwithstanding the stated aim of enhancing transparency and preventing electoral fraud, previous ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations advise against this practice in order to protect voter data and secrecy of the choice of whether or not to vote.²⁹

Candidate Rights and Registration

The right to stand as a candidate is granted to voters at least 25 years of age, who have been citizens of Armenia for the preceding four years, have been residents in the country for at least half of this period, do not hold dual citizenship, and have command of the Armenian language. The restrictions on dual citizens and the related criminalization, as well as the lengthy residency and language requirements, are at odds with Council of Europe and other international standards as well as good practice.³⁰

Only political parties or alliances may nominate candidates. Individual candidacies are not permitted, contrary to OSCE commitments.³¹ The law prescribes additional procedural and deposit requirements

²⁷ In response to the [alleged plan](#) to induce and transport 100,000 Armenian voters residing in the Russian Federation, on 3 June, the [Vice President of the parliament](#) and the [Minister of Economy](#), both running as Civil Contract Party candidates, made announcements on Facebook that Armenian voters coming from abroad were welcome but threatened that those that were bribed to return would be arrested upon arrival. All Armenian citizens holding valid documents and registered at an address in the country may vote in person at their designated polling station on election day. Citizens whose documents expired more than six months before election day may obtain a temporary document from the MCS, allowing them to be added to supplementary voter lists.

²⁸ According to the UNHCR [Operations Data Portal](#), more than 115,000 Armenians were displaced since September 2023. The authorities informed the ODIHR EOM that Armenia, between the 1990s and 2023, issued special passports for persons residing in the area of conflict, which did not confer citizenship rights, including the right to vote. In May 2026, three such passport holders appealed to the first district court of Yerevan for inclusion in the voter lists, and the Court granted their requests, following more than 120 similar rulings in 2021. The Ministry of Internal Affairs appealed these decisions to the Court of Appeal, which overturned them on procedural grounds.

²⁹ See the 2023 ODIHR and Venice Commission [Joint Opinion On Draft Amendments to the Electoral Code and Related Legislation](#), para 39, which states that “[t]he publication of the list of voters who actually participated in the elections should be avoided”.

³⁰ See the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) 2010 ruling on the case [Tănase v. Moldova](#), where the ECtHR found that banning dual nationals from being elected to parliament violates [Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 of the ECHR](#). Paragraph 15 of the 1996 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) [General Comment 25](#) states that “[p]ersons who are otherwise eligible to stand for election should not be excluded by unreasonable or discriminatory requirements such as education, residence or descent”. See also Section I.1.1.c.iii of the Venice Commission’s [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#), according to which “length of residence requirement may be imposed on nationals solely for local or regional elections”.

³¹ Paragraph 7.5 of the 1990 OSCE [Copenhagen Document](#) states that participating States will “respect the right of citizens to seek political or public office, individually or as representatives of political parties or organizations”.

for nomination.³² Contestants were required to submit candidate lists comprising between 80 and 300 candidates, which could include up to 30 per cent non-party members, and an optional second list of four candidates representing the main national minorities for reserved minority seats. Candidate lists were required to include at least 30 per cent representation of each gender, and the first 30 candidates on each list had to be approved by a party congress; both genders are to be represented in each grouping of three consecutive candidates on a list. All lists fulfilled these requirements at the registration stage.³³

In an inclusive and open process, the CEC registered 17 political parties and two alliances.³⁴ None of the candidate lists were headed by a woman. Four political parties fielded minority lists, comprising 20 candidates in total. By the 28 May legal deadline for withdrawals, 85 candidates from 13 contestants withdrew, mainly for private reasons, including the entire candidate list of the Progressive Centrist Party “Alliance”. Of the withdrawn candidates, 32 were women. A total of 1,938 candidates from 16 parties and two alliances contested the elections, including 724 women (37.3 per cent).

On 5 June, following the Prime Minister’s call during the previous day’s televised debate, the Republic Party requested that the CEC deregister Strong Armenia. The request alleged vote-buying, exceeding the campaign expenditure limit, dual citizenship of both the party leader and the head of the candidate list, and falsification of documents submitted for list registration. The CEC discussed the complaint in an open session and the two parties had the opportunity to present oral arguments. The complaint was rejected unanimously as none of the cited grounds were substantiated.

Election Campaign

The official campaign began on 8 May and ended one day before election day. The law does not prohibit early campaigning, and many contestants started campaigning before this period. However, most campaign regulations apply only during the official campaign period, which reduces transparency and oversight of the pre-campaign activities (see also *Campaign Finance*). Campaigning online also remains unregulated, except for requirements to label campaign content and paid political advertising. Overall, the campaign was vibrant and largely peaceful. Contestants used a variety of outreach methods, including printed and digital campaign materials, in-person events, media appearances, and online platforms.³⁵

Direct pressure from the Russian Federation in the form of escalating trade restrictions and threats to the future economic stability of the nation linked to the outcome of the elections featured throughout

³² Contestants are required to submit the charter of the party, a decision of the congress approving the candidate list, the written consent of candidates, their political programme and a deposit of AMD 7.5 million (EUR 17,400) for parties or AMD 15 million (EUR 34,900) for alliances. Deposits are returned if a party or alliance wins seats in parliament or gets at least two or four per cent of the votes, respectively.

³³ While the law does not require registered candidate lists to comply with this requirement if candidates subsequently withdraw, the gender quota applies at the stages of seat distribution. Mandates given to a party or alliance exceeding 70 per cent of the more represented gender are reassigned to candidates of the less represented gender to ensure at least 30 per cent representation, and where no such candidates appear on the electoral list, the corresponding mandates remain vacant.

³⁴ Eight parties were required to provide additional documentation for 35 candidates and, in line with the law, were granted 48 hours to rectify omissions; 23 of these were ultimately denied registration for non-fulfilment of the registration requirements. The Progressive Centrist Party “Alliance” and the Law, Democracy, and Discipline party appealed the denial of registration of one candidate each to the Administrative Court; both were rejected.

³⁵ ODIHR EOM LTOs observed 130 campaign events, the largest share held by Civil Contract Party and Strong Armenia, followed by Armenia Alliance and Prosperous Armenia. Women accounted for 18 per cent of speakers and 27 per cent of attendees. Some 89 per cent of the observed events were accessible to those with physical disabilities.

the campaign.³⁶ Russian officials and state-linked actors repeatedly framed the elections as a choice with consequences for Armenia's security, including by invoking a Ukraine scenario as a warning of the risks of closer alignment with the EU.³⁷

Before and during the campaign period, numerous allegations of electoral violations, including vote-buying schemes, emerged in public discourse and were proactively investigated by the authorities.³⁸ Such cases were at times followed by the publication by the authorities of intercepted private conversations, including of the accused, calling into question due process; these were also shared on social media accounts of ruling party members.³⁹ Supporters and candidates from Strong Armenia, Prosperous Armenia and Armenia Alliance were primary subjects of these investigations, which led to the perception of selective law enforcement and concerns about the impact on campaign opportunities.⁴⁰ Further, many IEOM interlocutors flagged that this also had a discouraging effect on voters to engage in opposition-related activities, including online, contrary to OSCE commitments.⁴¹

³⁶ Russian authorities introduced several restrictions on Armenian exports, including [flowers](#), [mineral water](#) and [alcohol](#), and subjected [food products](#) to inspections. At the May 2026 Astana summit, Eurasian Economic Union leaders [demanded](#) Armenia hold a referendum choosing between the bloc and the EU, warning of suspension over its Western-leaning policies. On 27 May, Russian authorities [announced](#) their intention to revise the terms of supply of natural gas, oil products, and diamonds, and on 28 May, [announced](#) "temporary restrictions" on additional agricultural products. The [Minister of Foreign Affairs](#) of Armenia responded to some of these statements, stating that the country is "interested in maintaining and developing a normal partnership with Russia". In response to these restrictions, on 4 June, the EU [pledged](#) more than EUR 50 million in immediate financial assistance and announced measures to facilitate trade in affected Armenian goods.

³⁷ On 9 May, Russian President Vladimir Putin [portrayed](#) Armenia's aspirations to join the EU as carrying risks comparable to those faced by Ukraine. On 30 May, the Russian Federation [recalled for consultations](#) its Ambassador in Yerevan "in connection with steps taken by the Armenian leadership toward closer relations with the European Union".

³⁸ The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the Investigative Committee (IC) are mandated to investigate different categories of electoral crimes. Since the calling of elections, the IC launched over 129 criminal proceedings, most of which are related to Strong Armenia supporters; 89 persons were charged, out of which 20 were in pre-trial detention on election day and 13 are under house arrest. For the same period, the ACC reported that 103 criminal proceedings have been initiated regarding electoral crimes, and 193 people were arrested in 52 of the aforementioned proceedings. Criminal prosecutions were initiated against 209 people. Prosecutors submitted to the competent court 14 criminal proceedings concerning electoral crimes involving 42 persons, most of them members or supporters of Strong Armenia. Positively, the ACC and some civil society organizations initiated public awareness campaigns aimed at preventing vote-buying through leaflets distributed at border crossings, SMS messages, and the media.

³⁹ Over 20 recordings of intercepted communications were posted on the ACC website, accompanied by statements incriminating opposition political parties of vote buying, during the course of preliminary investigations. On 20 May, following two requests submitted by Strong Armenia and Armenia Alliance, the CEC instructed both the Investigative Committee and the ACC to refrain from mentioning the names of the parties and alliances in the messages distributed.

⁴⁰ Criminal investigations were launched against several Prosperous Armenia and Strong Armenia candidates, including Strong Armenia's leading candidate; some charges concerned alleged offences dating back several years. On 21 May, the Prime Minister [announced](#) the arrest of a Prosperous Armenia candidate one day before the actual arrest took place. In Yerevan and most of the provinces, ODIHR EOM LTOs received reports describing an environment of fear, with opposition activists being intimidated, investigated or detained (Ararat, Aragatsotn, Armavir, Gegharkunik, Lori, Kotayk, Shirak, Syunik, Tavush, and Vayots Dzor).

⁴¹ Paragraph 7.7 of the 1990 [OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) requires "that law and public policy work to permit political campaigning to be conducted in a fair and free atmosphere in which neither administrative action, violence nor intimidation bars the parties and the candidates from freely presenting their views and qualifications, or prevents the voters from learning and discussing them or from casting their vote free of fear of retribution".

Civil Contract Party's electoral manifesto themes, together with the activities of its leader, were the principal drivers of the campaign.⁴² Key campaign topics included peace, regional stability, relations with Azerbaijan, the status of displaced Armenian refugees, the situation of Armenian detainees in Azerbaijan, as well as living standards, healthcare, the economy, rule of law and anti-corruption. At the same time, some prominent EU and US leaders publicly endorsed the Prime Minister, which was viewed by most opposition parties met by the IEOM as external involvement favouring the ruling party.⁴³

Campaign discourse was often confrontational and marked by war-related rhetoric.⁴⁴ Some opposition contestants further contributed to this by making unsubstantiated claims that a Civil Contract Party victory would lead to the resettlement of a large number of Azerbaijanis in Armenia.⁴⁵ During several campaign events, the Prime Minister used offensive and inflammatory language, including towards displaced Armenian refugees.⁴⁶ In some cases, the Prime Minister publicly threatened opposition candidates with investigations and nationalization of their companies; some of the nationalization proceedings had started before the campaign period.⁴⁷

The law prohibits the use of administrative resources for campaigning. Positively, recent amendments further clarified the prohibition and expanded the list of entities barred from campaign activities. Most ruling party candidates were public officials who, in line with the law, suspended the exercise of their

⁴² The election manifesto of Civil Contract Party was based on the government's "[Real Armenia](#)" programme, focusing on peace and regional normalization, through the "[Crossroads of Peace](#)" initiative. The manifesto also contained a reference for reform of the Armenian Apostolic Church, which the Church and the opposition criticized and considered unconstitutional.

⁴³ In February 2026, the [US Vice President](#) visited Armenia. Following the Armenia–EU Summit in May, the [President of France](#) attended a large-scale public event with the Prime Minister in Gyumri on 5 May and expressed support for him. On 26 May, the US Secretary of State paid an official visit to Armenia aimed at reinforcing the US–Armenia strategic partnership, following the January 2026 US–Armenia joint statement on the implementation framework for the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP) [initiative](#). On 28 May, on [Truth Social](#), the US President endorsed the Prime Minister's re-election.

⁴⁴ Mr. Pashinyan repeatedly framed the elections in stark security terms and [claimed](#) that an opposition victory would lead to war and described the leaders of Strong Armenia, Prosperous Armenia and the Armenia Alliance as a "three-headed party of war". On 18 May, Strong Armenia filed an application with the CEC alleging that Mr. Pashinyan's campaign speech incited hostility, hatred against opponents, and degraded their dignity. On 25 May, the CEC found that the application did not present information indicating a violation of the law. At several campaign events, the leader of Armenia Alliance used strongly offensive and discriminatory terms against the Prime Minister. ODIHR EOM LTOs reported discriminatory or hateful rhetoric at over 13 per cent of observed campaign events.

⁴⁵ The leader of Strong Armenia, on multiple occasions, [stated](#) that 300,000 Azerbaijanis would settle in Armenia.

⁴⁶ For example, on 18 May, following a verbal argument with an individual during a campaign event in Arabkir district of Yerevan, Mr. Pashinyan [used](#) strongly derogatory and insulting language, including against displaced Armenian refugees. The same day, the individual, Artur Osipyan, was detained, charged with hooliganism, public calls for violence and obstructing campaign activities, and placed in pre-trial detention for two months. Several civil society organizations [condemned](#) the detention as excessive and politically motivated. This was followed by a [statement](#) from the Human Rights Defender, and the International Federation for Human Rights [expressed concerns](#) about his announced hunger strike. Paragraph 100 of the 2026 Venice Commission [Report](#) on freedom of expression, prohibition of hate speech and promotion of pluralism in the context of electoral campaigns, recommends that states take positive measures to "provide timely and speedy results to [...] hate speech during election campaigns, as these not only impact the vulnerable minority groups but also distort the public debate".

⁴⁷ On 13 May, in Aragatsotn province, Mr. Pashinyan [stated](#) that the electricity company owned by the leader of Strong Armenia would be fully nationalized, and on 20 May, in Lori province, [threatened](#) to close businesses owned by the leader of Prosperous Armenia. The dispute over the electricity company erupted in June 2025, following Mr. Karapetyan's arrest for his public support of the Church, and after the hastily adopted amendments in the parliament in July 2025, which allowed for nationalization of the company; related court proceedings are ongoing. On 28 May, during a [press conference](#), Mr. Pashinyan, in his capacity as prime minister, threatened the leader of Prosperous Armenia with arrest and nationalization of his companies.

official duties during the campaign period.⁴⁸ While the ODIHR EOM did not observe systematic use of administrative resources at the local level for campaigning, it directly observed, and received multiple allegations, some of which it assessed as credible, regarding pressure on voters to attend ruling party campaign rallies.⁴⁹ Moreover, several social and economic measures were announced or introduced by the government shortly before the elections, which was widely perceived as benefitting the ruling party.⁵⁰ Such practices are at odds with OSCE commitments and international standards requiring a clear separation between the state and political parties, and may undermine equality of opportunity among contestants.⁵¹ In a few instances some IEOM interlocutors alleged that voters employed in private companies affiliated with the leaders of Prosperous Armenia and Strong Armenia were pressured to vote or attend their campaign events.

Social networks were a key source of information, with Facebook being the most widely used platform. Most contestants campaigned actively on social networks, where messaging centred on campaign events, interviews, and video messages by party leaders.⁵² The online campaign was confrontational and divisive, marked by frequent personal attacks between contestants and inflammatory rhetoric, mainly by the Prime Minister and, in some cases, opposition leaders.⁵³ Contestants' allegations of foreign interference and links to foreign powers featured prominently as a campaign topic and at times gave rise to conspiratorial narratives. Opposition leaders alleged ties between Civil Contract Party and

⁴⁸ Over 90 per cent of the Civil Contract Party list was composed of state and public employees (of the 284 candidates, 184 were public employees, 11 government officials and 52 outgoing members of parliament). ODIHR EOM LTOs reported that public officials were present in over 27 per cent of the observed campaign events.

⁴⁹ ODIHR EOM LTOs received allegations of pressure and inducements to attend campaign events, mainly by Civil Contract Party, in Yerevan and nine provinces. These included reports of public employees being coerced to attend campaign events by Civil Contract Party and, in isolated cases, by Armenia Alliance or Prosperous Armenia. On 13 May, in Aragatsotn province, students were reportedly given campaign materials and instructed to attend a Civil Contract Party event, after which the Prime Minister stated that he had personally instructed the school directors to resign. On 16 May, in Yerevan, newly procured city buses were publicly presented and promoted by the Prime Minister and the city mayor, a Civil Contract Party candidate.

⁵⁰ These included the [introduction](#) of universal healthcare from January 2026; [increases](#) in pensions and disability benefits from April 2026; performance-based bonuses and payments to senior officials and ministry employees; additional regional funding [announced](#) in March; zero-interest agricultural loans [announced](#) in April; and [forgiving](#) unpaid debts for certain categories of citizens in May. On 16 May, during a campaign rally, Mr. Pashinyan [promised](#) an administrative concession, whereby drivers who lost their licences due to points-based traffic violations would have them automatically reinstated without retaking the exam; the subsequent government proposal was not adopted by parliament due to lack of *quorum*.

⁵¹ Paragraph 5.4 of the 1990 OSCE [Copenhagen Document](#) requires “a clear separation between the State and political parties”. See also the 2016 Venice Commission and ODIHR [Joint Guidelines](#) for Preventing and Responding to the Misuse of Administrative Resources During Electoral Processes.

⁵² Among the Facebook accounts of the main political parties and their leaders, the Prime Minister had the highest number of followers, with some 1.2 million, followed by Edmon Marukyan of Bright Armenia with some 190,000, Hayk Marutyan of New Power Party with 179,000, Gagik Tsarukyan of Prosperous Armenia with 147,000, Robert Kocharyan of Armenia Alliance with 128,000, and Samvel Karapetyan of Strong Armenia with 74,000. The ODIHR EOM monitored 67 accounts across Facebook, Instagram and Telegram.

⁵³ On 14 May, in a Facebook reel, Mr Pashinyan [said](#) that if Mr. Kocharyan could spell the word “identity” letter by letter during a live broadcast, he would “not call him a ‘neanderthal’” but would instead call him by his name. On 27 May, referring to Mr. Karapetyan, he [said](#) on Facebook that “the oligarch from Kaluga [...] must be placed in penitentiary as a spy, an electricity thief, and a money launderer”. In another reel, he [stated](#) that “the pseudo-elite of ‘Karabakh’ [...] must be brought to its knees as a result of this political process”. Civil Contract Party had adopted a [Code of Ethics](#) requiring party members to “reject hate speech, insults, harassment, intimidation or any other form of pressure”, both offline and online. The leader of Armenia Alliance used derogatory and offensive language during several campaign events, clips of which were published on his Facebook account, including on 16 May, when he [referred](#) to Mr Pashinyan as “that drunken clown”, and on 27 May, when he [called](#) him “Aliyev’s doggy”. On 18 May, an Armenia Alliance candidate stated on Facebook, in reference to the Prime Minister: “This guy needs a rabies injection”.

the Azerbaijani leadership, while senior government figures repeatedly accused opposition representatives of allegiance to the Russian Federation.⁵⁴

The ODIHR EOM noted an abundance of English-language posts on X – a platform with limited reach in Armenia – with manipulative and false content aimed at discrediting the Prime Minister, the government, and the electoral process.⁵⁵ This corresponded to findings of fact-checking organizations, which identified an increase in co-ordinated information manipulation operations, originating primarily from actors in the Russian Federation.⁵⁶ In the instances where such narratives entered the domestic information environment, they were amplified on Telegram. Several IEOM interlocutors also raised concerns about domestic manipulative narratives and the alleged use of “troll factories” by main contestants. Third-party accounts also conducted campaigning online and, along with some candidates, disseminated AI-generated and manipulative content to discredit opponents, which was further circulated and amplified.⁵⁷ The use of such intentionally misleading narratives and divisive rhetoric negatively affected the reliability of information available to voters.

To address increased hybrid threats and foreign influence operations, the government aimed to enhance preparedness through a 2025 legislative package on cybersecurity, public information management, and the creation of the Information Systems Regulatory Commission, a regulatory body responsible for digitization, which was, however, not operational before the elections.

During the campaign, several state bodies monitored the online information environment. The CEC cooperated with the Information System Agency of Armenia (ISAA), which detected and responded to cyber threats and monitored co-ordinated inauthentic behaviour on social network platforms. The CEC had direct communication channels with TikTok, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior and the CEC acted as focal points for reporting irregularities to Meta. None of the platforms published data on co-ordinated influence operations or related enforcement during the campaign period, although they reported restricting election-related content that breached their community standards

⁵⁴ A 19 May [article](#) by *The Insider* alleged that the leader of Strong Armenia, Mr. Karapetyan, had acted as a foreign agent; the piece was further amplified by third-party paid advertisements on social network platforms. On 19 May, the speaker of the National Assembly and Civil Contract Party candidate [stated](#) on Facebook that Mr. Karapetyan “is an employee of the Russian FSB” [Federal Security Service], and on 24 May he accused Narek Karapetyan, lead candidate of Strong Armenia, of being a Russian citizen. On 21 May, the leader of Armenia Alliance [stated](#) at a campaign event that “whoever votes for Nikol [Pashinyan], votes for Aliyev”, referring to the president of Azerbaijan. The same day, Anna Grigoryan, third on the party list, [wrote](#) on Facebook, in reference to Mr Pashinyan, that “all one has to do is look at what Aliyev says, and at what you are doing in Armenia”. On 23 May, Ishkhan Saghatelyan, second on the Armenia Alliance list, [stated](#) that “this government is a hostage to the enemy”.
⁵⁵ In addition, on 22 May, a [post](#) on X shared a video misusing ODIHR’s logo and falsely claiming that ODIHR had discovered a secret CEC surveillance software that could be used to commit electoral fraud.

⁵⁶ See a 16 May [report](#) by Fact Investigative Platform, CivilNet’s 19 May [report](#) and 20 May [report](#), a 20 May [report](#) from Media Diversity Institute; and a 24 May [report](#) by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project.

⁵⁷ For example, a central message of Strong Armenia alleged resettlement of Azerbaijanis in Armenia after the elections, which was disseminated through AI-generated videos depicting, among other things, their [mass transport](#) as “settlers” and [takeover](#) of Armenian kindergartens. The Prime Minister repeatedly [refuted](#) the claim of planned Azerbaijani settlement. A number of third-party accounts published narratives claiming that Mr. Karapetyan has pledged to send 300,000 Armenian men to support the Russian Federation’s invasion of Ukraine. Prosperous Armenia posted an AI-generated [video](#) on Facebook, which refers to the Prime Minister as the “governor of Western Azerbaijan”. AI-generated fake [videos](#) of Mr. Pashinyan were also [shared](#) on Facebook, in which he appears to use hateful rhetoric against pensioners, soldiers, and small business-owners.

before the official campaign.⁵⁸ Authorities assessed the openness of social network platforms to cooperate with local fact-checkers positively, but stated that platforms' response to flagged content was often slow.

The Information and Public Relations Centre (IPRC) supported the Strategic Communications Department of the Prime Minister's Office in coordinating the government's response to disinformation.⁵⁹ In the run-up to the elections, following a request from the authorities, an EU Hybrid Rapid Response Team provided advisory support to institutions in countering hybrid threats.⁶⁰ The IPRC disseminated awareness raising materials about disinformation and set up a fact-checking platform for the public, but did not widely promote this tool. Overall, the authorities took notable steps to address disinformation, including through inter-institutional co-operation and external advisory support. However, there was a lack of publicly available information on the regulatory and institutional basis for such co-operation, as well as the authorities' efforts to monitor and respond to disinformation during the campaign. This, along with the absence of timely and reliable communication to debunk disinformation narratives, limited the transparency and effectiveness of state efforts.⁶¹ Civil society and media contributed to debunking false information, including through a joint newsroom established by media outlets for the elections.⁶²

Campaign Finance

Campaign finance is regulated by the Electoral Code and the Law on Political Parties. Amendments adopted in 2021 and 2024 increased donation and expenditure limits and redistributed oversight competences. The definition of campaign expenditure was extended to cover organizational expenses, such as costs for office space, transportation, communications, and campaign staff, partly addressing a prior ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations. However, at odds with prior ODIHR

⁵⁸ By March 2026, TikTok had removed around 80 inauthentic accounts with 27,892 followers operating from the Russian Federation, which targeted audiences in Armenia, Moldova, and Georgia, and sought to amplify narratives favourable to certain politicians and critical of others, primarily in the context of Armenia's parliamentary elections. Google, with support from Meta, blocked 63 YouTube channels linked to a Russia-related coordinated influence operation sharing content in Arabic, Armenian, English, Kazakh, and Ukrainian; 25 YouTube channels connected to another operation, with content in Armenian, English, German and Russian that was supportive of Russia and critical of Ukraine and the United States; and 25 channels as part of its investigation into coordinated influence operations linked to Azerbaijan, which had content critical of Armenia. According to Meta's report for the first quarter of 2026, it disrupted a network attributed with high confidence to "Ruposters", for coordinated inauthentic behaviour, and acted in connection to 52 Facebook accounts, 134 pages, and 35 Instagram accounts. The network targeted audiences in some 20 countries, including Armenia, had more than 274,000 followers cumulatively, and spent around USD 49,000 on ads.

⁵⁹ Authorities informed the ODIHR EOM that during the course of the campaign, they had identified a number of disinformation publications, mostly attributed to operatives linked to the Russian Federation; and had flagged websites as potentially linked to these same networks. In at least two cases, authorities notified Meta of co-ordinated inauthentic behaviour activities, and Meta took action against relevant accounts.

⁶⁰ The technical and expert support focused on illicit financial flows, cyber threats, and foreign information manipulation and interference, to institutions including ISAA and the Prime Minister's Office.

⁶¹ During the campaign, only one false claim was [countered](#) on the Facebook account of the government, debunking an allegation that the government plans to destroy the Strong Armenia with fake audio recordings on vote-buying. According to paragraphs 12-14 of the 2024 Venice Commission's [Interpretative Declaration on the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters as concerns digital technologies and artificial intelligence](#) and to section II.3 of the Interpretative Declaration's Explanatory Report, the State has an obligation to take effective steps to ensure a supportive environment for robust public debate, preventing and punishing infringements of the voters' freedom to form an opinion and to address the challenge posed by organised information disorder campaigns, which have the potential to undermine the integrity of electoral processes, including through regulation by the state and an independent body with adequate resources and powers to implement their mandate and act speedily."

⁶² The news room comprised representatives of *Hetq*, *CivilNet*, *Factor TV*, *media.am*, and *Ampop Media*, and [published](#) over 60 fact-checking and investigative articles related to disinformation narratives.

recommendation, expenditures incurred before the official campaign period remain unreported and do not count towards the expenditure limit. Moreover, gaps in the regulatory framework and its implementation remain, compromising transparency, accountability and integrity of party and campaign finance.

Four parliamentary parties and alliances received annual public funding, based on their results in the 2021 elections. No public funding is provided specifically for electoral contestants, which may increase their reliance on large private donations and other private sources of funding.⁶³ Each voter may donate up to AMD 10 million (EUR 23,300) annually to a party, including through cash deposits, which does not ensure traceability. Several ODIHR EOM interlocutors voiced concerns that some donations made in 2025 and disclosed in 2026 appeared to reflect a broader pattern of coordinated donations, including by employees of the same institutions.⁶⁴ While donations from legal entities, foreign and anonymous sources are prohibited, several high-cost events promoting ruling party policies were openly sponsored by prominent companies, raising concerns about intertwined business and political interests.⁶⁵

A party may transfer up to AMD 800 million (EUR 1.86 million) to its campaign account, which is also the expenditure limit. The ODIHR EOM noted substantial expenditure before the official campaign period, including on campaign premises and high-cost events, which did not count towards the expenditure limit. Third-party campaigning is not regulated and various civil society organizations, media actors and influencers were involved in campaign-related activities, without disclosure requirements of their sources of funding. Campaign finance reporting requirements also apply to online campaign expenditures. Yet, extensive online campaigning was conducted by third-party accounts, without transparency regarding the source of funding (see also *Campaign Environment*).⁶⁶ Despite a ban on charitable activities after the announcement of the elections, some foundations associated with the ruling party continued activities, including during the campaign period, while some of those associated with opposition parties were subject to investigations.⁶⁷

The CEC's Oversight and Audit Service (OAS) oversees campaign finances, while the Corruption Prevention Commission (CPC) oversees regular party finance. From 8 May, every three days, the CPC and the OAS received bank statements on party income and campaign expenditures, respectively. As

⁶³ Since 2021, four parties have received annual public funding totalling AMD 520 million (EUR 1.21 million): Civil Contract Party received AMD 268 million (EUR 623,300), Armenia Alliance AMD 163 million (EUR 379,100), Prosperous Armenia AMD 50 million (EUR 116,300), and the Republic Party AMD 38 million (EUR 88,400). EUR 1 = AMD 430.

⁶⁴ A legal amendment in 2024 requires all donations to be made to the party accounts rather than the campaign accounts, enabling aggregation of donations by the same donor; however, the names of donors are published only in the year following the elections.

⁶⁵ On 19 April in Gyumri and 25 April in Yerevan, large-scale "Voice of Peace" concerts were held, echoing Civil Contract Party's campaign slogan, "Stand Up for Peace". The Prime Minister appeared and performed at the Gyumri concert, which was widely viewed as the party's inaugural campaign event. Both concerts were sponsored by Fast Bank. The Independent Observer Alliance [filed](#) a complaint with the Corruption Prevention Commission (CPC) alleging illegal campaign financing. [According to](#) the *Akanates* citizen observer group, the party's campaign logo and slogan featured during a 2026 New Year celebration, also financed by Fast Bank.

⁶⁶ Based on data from Meta Ad Library, spending on political advertisements during the campaign period amounted to some EUR 815,000, with Strong Armenia spending EUR 260,000, Armenia Alliance some EUR 70,000, Civil Contract Party some EUR 60,000, Wings of Unity some EUR 16,000, and Bright Armenia EUR 13,000. Campaign advertisements also appeared on Google, YouTube and other online platforms, without disclosure of sponsorship.

⁶⁷ The My Step Foundation, headed by Mr. Pashinyan's partner and bearing the name of a former parliamentary faction of the current ruling party, was not considered party-related. By contrast, the ACC [announced](#) that it investigated dozens of employees of the Strong Armenia Party and the associated Foundation My Way, on the grounds that their salaries were "disguised vote buying". On 2 June, 13 complaints related to alleged violations of the ban on charitable activities during the electoral period by the executive director of the "My Step" Foundation were filed at the Administrative Court by the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly - Vanadzor.

required by law, all contestants submitted campaign finance reports to the OAS on 17 and 27 May.⁶⁸ The OAS and the CPC published the total income and expenditure of each contestant, as well as contestants' reports, but the information was not made available in a user-friendly and searchable format, limiting the opportunity for public scrutiny. Final campaign finance reports are due on 11 June, and must be published together with the OAS conclusions no later than one day before the announcement of the final election results. Sanctions for irregularities include fines, imprisonment, and deregistration of contestants. After checking the income and assets of selected donors, the CPC referred the names of over 100 donors of 7 political parties to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for investigation. The selection of cases to be investigated, in the absence of legally prescribed and objective criteria, raised concerns about the potential for a selective and politically motivated approach.

Media

The media environment is pluralistic but polarized and significantly constrained by a shrinking and narrowly concentrated advertising market, which undermines the financial sustainability of media outlets and exposes them to political influence. The 2025 suspension of USAID support for non-partisan media and civil society organizations has further exacerbated these challenges, while concerns persist over the lack of transparency of media ownership. Media diversity has been further reduced following the loss of terrestrial broadcasting by the opposition-affiliated *H2* and *Yerkir Media* in 2021–23, as well as the recent closure of *Shoghakat TV*, affiliated with the Armenian Apostolic Church. The Public Broadcaster of Armenia (PBA) maintains a dominant position in the broadcast sector, benefiting from stable state funding while also generating substantial commercial advertising revenue.

The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and freedom of the media. Although defamation and libel are decriminalized, many ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed concern about the increasing number of civil defamation lawsuits, mainly filed by senior public officials.⁶⁹ Criminal hooliganism provisions have also recently been applied against online media and several bloggers for content deemed offensive to senior public officials, resulting in pre-trial detentions and, in one case, the search and seizure of video-editing equipment.⁷⁰ Journalists have also faced verbal attacks, threats, and other forms of obstruction and pressure in the course of their work, which further contributes to a constrained environment for political reporting.

The ODIHR EOM media monitoring concluded that most monitored outlets were instrumentalized by contestants to amplify mutual insults and divisive campaign rhetoric (see also *Election Campaign*),

⁶⁸ As of 27 May, the contestants reporting the highest income and expenditure were Civil Contract Party, with AMD 600 million (EUR 1,395,300); Strong Armenia, AMD 400 million (EUR 930,200); Hayastan Alliance, AMD 300 million (EUR 697,700); and Prosperous Armenia Party, AMD 90 million (EUR 209,300). According to CPC data, between 6 and 27 May, Strong Armenia received AMD 604 million (EUR 1,404,700) from 325 donors; Civil Contract Party AMD 391 million (EUR 909,300) from 715 donors; Armenia Alliance AMD 153 million (EUR 355,800) from 65 donors; Prosperous Armenia Party AMD 95 million (EUR 220,900) from 52 donors; and Wings of Unity AMD 66 million (EUR 153,500) from 23 donors.

⁶⁹ The 2025 [Annual Report](#) by the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression identified 61 defamation lawsuits filed in 2025 against journalists and media outlets, up from 43 in [2024](#). The majority of such lawsuits were filed by senior public officials, including the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Parliament.

⁷⁰ On 13 November 2025, the National Security Service detained the co-hosts of *AntiFake.am* podcast on [charges](#) of hooliganism stemming from podcast episodes and Facebook posts responding to vulgar posts by the Speaker. Both co-hosts were placed in pre-trial detention, which was later converted to administrative supervision. They had faced similar [charges](#) in March 2024 in connection with remarks about the Prime Minister and were acquitted in May 2025. Paragraph 38 of [General Comment 34 to the ICCPR](#) reads that “the mere fact that forms of expression are considered to be insulting to a public figure is not sufficient to justify the imposition of penalties”. Paragraph 9 further notes that “[t]he harassment, intimidation or stigmatization of a person, including arrest, detention, trial or imprisonment for reasons of the opinions they may hold, constitutes a violation of article 19, paragraph 1”.

offering little substantive analysis of contestants' platforms, thereby limiting voters' opportunity to make an informed choice.⁷¹ While the public television and some private monitored media displayed clear bias in favour of particular political forces, other private media outlets monitored by the ODIHR EOM mainly focused on campaign events and frequently aired footage provided by parties, with limited factual editorial commentary, thereby falling short of the legal requirement to provide impartial information during election campaigns.

Contrary to its legal obligations and public mandate, the PBA displayed a clear bias in favour of the ruling party in the newscasts of *H1*, while covering the main opposition contestants predominantly negatively. *H1* devoted 14 per cent of its coverage to the Civil Contract Party, predominantly in a positive tone, while Strong Armenia, Armenia Alliance and Prosperous Armenia received 17, 11 and 910 per cent, respectively, mainly in a negative tone. Similar patterns were observed on *FreeNews* television and the *Armtimes* website.⁷² By contrast, *Kentron*, *H2* and *Yerkir Media* televisions, as well as the *news.am* and *panorama* websites consistently portrayed the government and the Civil Contract Party negatively, while providing favourable coverage to selected opposition contestants.⁷³

The newscasts of *ATV*, *Armenia TV* and *Shant* relied extensively on footage provided by political parties, supplemented by limited factual editorial commentary.⁷⁴ *CivilNet* diverged from this pattern by largely focusing on the Civil Contract Party and Strong Armenia, providing both with comparable, mainly neutral coverage. The *Azatutyun* web portal was more critical of the Civil Contract Party and, to a lesser extent, of Strong Armenia, Armenia Alliance, and Prosperous Armenia.

The public television complied with its legal obligation to provide each contestant with 90 minutes of free airtime, which the CEC allotted in daily slots during prime-time. Most licensed private broadcasters provided contestants with the required 25 minutes of free airtime, generally scheduled outside prime-time hours.⁷⁵ Paid airtime, available under equal conditions, was predominantly purchased by Strong Armenia, followed by Civil Contract Party, Prosperous Armenia and, to a lesser extent, Armenia Alliance. Most monitored broadcasters also organized one-on-one interviews with party representatives; these provided the contestants with an additional platform to present their views. The public television organized three debates open to all contestants; however, not all entities chose to participate; the discussion was often confrontational, largely driven by representatives of Civil Contract Party.

The Commission for Television and Radio (CTR) oversees broadcast media compliance with the legislation and monitored 41 broadcasters on a rotational basis, including some cable outlets. Although

⁷¹ During the official campaign period, the ODIHR EOM monitored prime-time broadcasts (from 18:00 to 00:00) on the nationwide TV channels *H1* (public TV), *ATV*, *Armenia TV*, *Kentron*, *Shant*, as well as Yerevan-based *FreeNews*, *H2*, and *Yerkir Media*. The ODIHR EOM also monitored politically relevant articles published by the online media sources [armtimes](#), [azatutyun](#) (the Armenian edition of *RFE/RL*), [civilnet](#), [news.am](#), and [panorama](#).

⁷² *FreeNews* television and the *Armtimes* website devoted 19 and 32 per cent, respectively, of mostly positive coverage to Civil Contract Party, while covering the main opposition contestants largely negatively.

⁷³ *Kentron* devoted 24 per cent of its coverage to Prosperous Armenia, while *Yerkir Media* devoted 13 per cent to Armenia Alliance, and *Panorama* 20 per cent to Strong Armenia, mostly in a positive tone. *H2* and *news.am* each devoted between 12 and 13 per cent of their coverage to Strong Armenia and Armenia Alliance each, mainly positively. The Civil Contract Party received 10 per cent of the coverage on *Kentron*, 13 per cent on *Yerkir Media*, 18 per cent on *H2*, 21 per cent on *news.am* and 24 per cent on *Panorama*, predominantly negative in tone.

⁷⁴ *ATV*, *Armenia TV* and *Shant* dedicated between 16 and 20 per cent of their coverage to Civil Contract Party, between 15 and 19 per cent to Strong Armenia, between 6 and 13 per cent to Armenia Alliance, and between 4 and 8 per cent to Prosperous Armenia, while other contestants received up to 4 per cent.

⁷⁵ On 14 May, Bright Armenia and New Power Party filed complaints with the CTR alleging that *Armenia TV*, *ATV*, and *Fastsports* had failed to provide them with free airtime. The CTR dismissed the complaints against *Armenia TV* and *ATV* on 27 May as the broadcasters subsequently started to provide airtime. On 1 June, it issued a formal warning to *Fastsports*.

it monitored the public broadcaster, it has no sanctioning authority over it. Based on its monitoring, on 27 May, it formally reminded the public broadcaster of its obligation to provide impartial and unbiased coverage of contestants. The CTR initiated five administrative proceedings *ex officio*, and two upon complaints, mostly concerning interruptions of campaign programmes with advertisements or failure to provide free airtime. It also initiated proceedings against *H2* for failing to provide impartial news coverage of parties, and against *TV5* over an unidentified Armenia Alliance advertisement that, in its view, contained content harmful to minors.⁷⁶ Enforcement by the CTR contributed to prompt remedies in some cases, including on access to free airtime; however, at least one formal warning was not followed by compliance. Due to its non-systematic monitoring, proceedings on advertising and news impartiality appeared selective and did not consistently address comparable violations by other broadcasters.

Election Dispute Resolution

The legal framework for election disputes has remained unchanged since the last elections. It provides for administrative review by election commissions, and judicial appeal before the Administrative Court, whose decisions are final. Despite previous ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations and at odds with international good practice, the right to file election-related complaints, in most cases, is limited to persons whose electoral rights are directly affected.⁷⁷ Complaints and appeals must be adjudicated within three to five days, and in most cases before election day. The Administrative Court is the sole instance deciding on the deregistration of candidates for certain violations, upon the CEC's request, with no avenue for appeal, which is contrary to international good practice.⁷⁸ The CEC's final decision on election results may be challenged before the Constitutional Court.

In the election period, no formal complaints were filed with TECs. The CEC adjudicated five formal complaints in public sessions, in a transparent manner, two concerning the impartiality of citizen observers, two the registration of parties for the elections, and one related to alleged incitement to hatred against an opponent, all of which were rejected; one case was appealed; the appeal was rejected. In addition, the CEC informed the ODIHR EOM that, since February, it had received more than 600 notifications and requests, including some 40 concerning alleged campaign and campaign finance violations and other administrative offences. These were generally referred to the competent authorities or rejected as falling outside the CEC's mandate.

The law authorizes the CEC to decide on requests to lift the immunity of parliamentary candidates for the purpose of initiating criminal prosecution, but does not set clear criteria for such decisions. Following requests by the Prosecutor General, the CEC consented to the initiation of criminal prosecution against 12 candidates, 8 from Strong Armenia and 4 from Prosperous Armenia, in sessions closed at the prosecutor's request on grounds of investigation secrecy. Two of these CEC decisions

⁷⁶ The AI-generated advertisement presented a hypothetical scenario in which Armenia would become "Western Azerbaijan" if Civil Contract Party remained in power. It depicted a monument to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in place of the Mother Armenia statue, which, in the CTR's view, "discredited or belittled national cultural heritage" and therefore could be broadcast only between 00:00 and 06:00. ODIHR EOM media monitoring identified the same unidentified advertisement on several other broadcasters; however, the CTR did not initiate proceedings.

⁷⁷ See section II.3.3.f of the 2002 Venice Commission's Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters, which states that "[a]ll candidates and all voters registered in the constituency concerned must be entitled to appeal. Standing in such appeals must be granted as widely as possible. It must be open to every elector in the constituency and to every candidate standing for election there to lodge an appeal. A reasonable quorum may, however, be imposed for appeals by voters on the results of elections".

⁷⁸ Paragraph 5.10 of the 1990 OSCE [Copenhagen Document](#) states that "everyone will have an effective means of redress against administrative decisions, so as to guarantee respect for fundamental rights".

were challenged at the administrative court, which did not publish the decisions, due to the confidential nature of the cases.

Fifty-seven further appeals were filed with the Administrative Court. Twenty-one were rejected, including 17 petitioning for inclusion of the plaintiff in the voter list and issue residency or citizenship certificates, two related to candidate registration, and two to alleged campaign violations. Three appeals were granted, resulting in orders requesting the CEC to accredit an observer organization and the MCS to issue a citizenship certificate. Thirteen appeals were returned to the applicants for correction, and the rest of the cases, concerning administrative offences, are pending. With the exception of the appeals related to the initiation of criminal charges against candidates, all cases were reviewed in public sessions in a transparent manner, with the parties involved, and the decisions were taken within legal deadlines and, in most cases, published on the Court's website on the same day.

Election Observation

The legislation provides for citizen and international observation of the entire electoral process, as well as observation by contestant representatives. To be accredited, citizen observer groups must have included an explicit reference to democracy and human rights protection in their charters for at least one year before the elections are announced. These provisions place an undue restriction on the opportunity to observe, and are at odds with international good practice and previous ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations.⁷⁹

The January 2026 legal amendments introduced additional requirements aimed at preventing party-affiliated organizations from serving as observers, including the submission of activity reports and information on funding sources. While most citizen observer groups supported these changes, concerns persisted that some registered groups remained affiliated with contestants. The CEC registered 13 citizen observer groups, comprising 2,672 observers, and 8 international observer organizations.⁸⁰ The CEC denied the accreditation of one prospective IEOM observer. *Akanates* and the Independent Observer Alliance both had a long-term observation component and deployed the largest number of observers, 785 and 752, respectively. Several other civil society organizations monitored specific aspects of the process.⁸¹

Election Day

Election day was orderly and calm, and the process was assessed positively in the vast majority of polling stations observed. Women were well represented among PEC members in these polling stations, comprising 70 per cent of members and 51 per cent of chairpersons. Accessibility was a significant concern, with only 45 per cent of polling stations assessed as independently accessible for voters with disabilities, while the layout was unsuitable for such voters in 27 per cent of observations. Cameras were installed in polling stations and provided a live stream that allowed voting and counting to be followed.

⁷⁹ Paragraph 91 of the 2024 [Venice Commission Report on Election Observers as Human Rights Defenders](#) stipulates that “Requirements for registration should not be overly formalistic. [...] The wider the opportunity to observe elections, the easier it is for any interested person to act as an observer”.

⁸⁰ The CEC initially rejected the registration of the *Menq* observer organization because its statute did not expressly refer to democracy protection; following an appeal, the Administrative Court overturned the decision, finding that the statute should be assessed on the basis of its overall content rather than a literal reference.

⁸¹ Disability Rights Agenda observed mobile voting with a focus on the rights of people with psycho-social disabilities; *Lusastgh* focused on the inclusivity of the electoral process for persons with disabilities; and Helsinki Committee Armenia organized a smaller-scale mission monitoring rule of law and human rights in the process.

Opening was assessed positively in 183 of 188 observations. Polling stations opened on time, and PECs followed prescribed procedures. In 5 per cent of polling stations observed, unauthorized persons, mostly contestant proxies, interfered with the work of PECs.

Voting was observed in 1,653 instances at 1,403 polling stations and was assessed positively in 98 per cent of observations as orderly, transparent and efficient. Negative assessments were mainly due to overcrowding, inadequate layout, and interference by contestant proxies. Isolated procedural errors were observed, including ballot boxes not properly sealed in 2 per cent of observations. Campaign materials or activities were observed inside or within 50 metres of polling stations in 6 per cent of observations. In 9 per cent of observations, PECs had recorded complaints or dissenting opinions by PEC members, observers or proxies, many concerning alleged irregularities.

The secrecy of the vote was generally respected, although voters did not always select their ballot in secrecy, as observed in 4 per cent of polling stations. In addition, group and proxy voting were observed in 3 and 2 per cent of observations, respectively. In some 4 per cent of observations, voters removed unused ballots from the voting booth, at odds with prescribed procedures. These issues appeared mainly linked to insufficient voter understanding, particularly among elderly voters, and to overcrowding, rather than to deliberate attempts to compromise secrecy. Voter authentication devices (VADs) operated effectively in almost all polling stations observed, and PECs generally followed related procedures.⁸² Technical issues were limited, although a few observations noted discrepancies between VAD-generated information and paper voter lists.

Contestant proxies were present in 98 per cent of polling stations observed, mainly from Strong Armenia and Civil Contract Party, who were observed in 90 and 87 per cent of polling station visits, respectively. Interference in the voting process was reported in 6 per cent of observations, mostly involving proxies from these two contestants who exceeded their observer role by directing voters, giving procedural instructions, remaining too close to voting booths or ballot boxes, or otherwise assuming PEC functions. Citizen observers were present in 52 per cent of observations, contributing to the transparency of the process. Persons not authorized to be present were observed in 4 per cent of polling stations, mostly police, although this rarely affected the conduct of voting.

The vote count was positively assessed in 144 of 158 polling stations observed and was generally transparent, efficient and orderly. Party representatives were present in all counts observed, while citizen observers were present in almost half of observations. IEOM observers were able to follow the count without restriction, and PECs cooperated fully.

Procedural shortcomings were observed in some polling stations. In 29 observations, the number of signatures did not fully match the number of issued VAD confirmation slips, generally with a small number of signatures fewer than slips, often one or two, indicating that this two-step safeguard was not consistently applied. Decisions on ballot validity were assessed as consistent in almost all observations, with disputes among PEC members noted in a few cases. Results protocols were completed fully and reconciled in almost all observations, although 14 PECs had difficulties completing them. More serious irregularities included non-PEC members directly participating in the count in 11 observations and the use of pre-signed protocols in 6. PECs did not post a copy of the results protocol for public scrutiny in 8 observations.

⁸² According to the preliminary CEC results, less than one voter per polling station was added to supplementary voter lists, such as mobile voters, persons with ID documents expired for more than six months (including citizens residing abroad), and voters added by court decisions.

IEOM observers assessed positively the tabulation process in 43 of the 50 observations. They were, however, denied access to the data entry process in 11 of the 38 TECs nationwide upon verbal instruction by the CEC to the TECs, citing cyber security concerns, limiting transparency. The intake of materials and tabulation was assessed as organized, professional and efficient, but observers also reported overcrowding and delays in handling the process, and noted that some TEC premises were not fully adequate. Citizen observers were present in 48 instances, while party proxies only in 5 of the observations. In 16 observations, PEC members had to correct some PEC results protocols due to arithmetic errors. All TECs observed published regular updates of the results, while the CEC started publishing nationwide preliminary results online at 00:00. Turnout was 58.97 per cent.

By the closing of polling stations, the CEC reported 23 complaints submitted on election day, mainly related to voter list inaccuracies and violations of campaign silence. No complaints were reported to have been submitted to TECs. Throughout election day, a number of law-enforcement actions took place related to alleged vote-buying and other electoral offences.⁸³ Following the vote, opposition representatives alleged that these measures selectively targeted their supporters.⁸⁴

***The English version of this report is the only official document.
An unofficial translation is available in Armenian.***

⁸³ According to the Prosecutor General's Office, 143 alleged election-related criminal cases were reported. Investigations were initiated in 21 cases, and criminal charges were brought against 48 individuals. The Investigative Committee registered 129 reports of electoral offences, initiated 59 criminal proceedings, 30 of them concerning multiple voting or voting on behalf of another person, 17 for violations of vote secrecy, 9 for obstructing electoral rights or the work of electoral commissions, and three for the dissemination of false information. Nine individuals were arrested in connection with these proceedings. The Anti-Corruption Committee initiated investigations in more than 11 cases related to vote-buying, and at least 24 persons were arrested on these charges.

⁸⁴ Including the leaders of [Strong Armenia](#), [Prosperous Armenia](#) and [Armenia Alliance](#).

MISSION INFORMATION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Yerevan, 8 June 2026 – This Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions is the result of a common endeavour involving the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the European Parliament (EP). The assessment was made to determine whether the elections complied with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections, as well as with national legislation.

Farah Karimi was appointed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office as Special Co-ordinator and leader of the OSCE short-term observers. Janez Lenarčič is the Head of the ODIHR EOM, deployed from 22 April 2026. Jevrosima Pejović is the Head of the OSCE PA delegation, Damien Cottier is the Head of the PACE delegation, and Nathalie Loiseau is the Head of the EP delegation.

This Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions is delivered prior to the completion of the electoral process. The final assessment of the elections will depend, in part, on the conduct of the remaining stages of the electoral process, including the tabulation and announcement of results, and the handling of possible post-election day complaints or appeals. ODIHR will issue a comprehensive final report, including recommendations for potential improvements, some months after the completion of the electoral process. The OSCE PA will present its report at its next Standing Committee meeting. The PACE will present its report at the September 2026 part-session in Strasbourg. The EP will present a report at one of the next meetings of the Delegation for Relations with the South Caucasus and at Special Committee on the European Democracy Shield.

The ODIHR EOM includes 15 experts in the capital and 30 long-term observers deployed throughout the country. On election day, 457 observers from 42 countries were deployed, including 322 observers deployed by ODIHR, as well as a 93-member delegation from the OSCE PA, a 27-member delegation from PACE, and a 15-member delegation from the EP. There were 46 per cent of women among the observers. Opening was observed in 108 polling stations and voting was observed in 1,403 polling stations across the country. Counting was observed in 158 polling stations, and the tabulation in all 38 TECs.

The IEOM wishes to thank the authorities of Armenia for the invitation to observe the elections, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Central Election Commission for their assistance. The IEOM also expresses its appreciation to other state institutions, political parties, media, civil society organizations and representatives of the international community for their co-operation.

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