Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

# KYRGYZSTAN

## PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
## 27 January 2027

## ODIHR NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION REPORT

## 3 – 6 November 2026

Warsaw
26 November 2026

## TABLE OF CONTENTS


**I. INTRODUCTION ..... 1**

**II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... 1**

**III. FINDINGS ..... 4**

A. Background and Political Context ..... 4
B. Legal Framework and Electoral System ..... 5
C. Election Administration ..... 6
D. Use of Technologies ..... 7
E. Voter Registration ..... 8
F. Candidate Registration ..... 9
G. Election Campaign ..... 9
H. Campaign Finance ..... 10
I. Media ..... 11
J. Election Dispute Resolution ..... 13
K. Citizen and International Observers ..... 13

**IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..... 14**

**ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS ..... 15**

**KYRGYZSTAN**
**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**
**27 JANUARY 2027**

**ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Following an invitation to observe the 27 January 2027 presidential election, and in accordance with its mandate, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) undertook a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) from 3 to 6 November 2026. The NAM was composed of Ranko Vukčević, ODIHR Election Adviser, and Kakha Inaishvili, ODIHR Election Adviser.

The purpose of the NAM was to assess the pre-election environment and preparations for this election. Based on this assessment, the NAM recommends whether to deploy an ODIHR election-related activity for the forthcoming election and, if so, what type of activity best meets the identified needs. The NAM held meetings with officials from state institutions, media, and civil society. A list of interlocutors is annexed to this report.

ODIHR would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) for its co-operation and assistance in organizing the NAM. ODIHR would also like to thank all of its interlocutors for taking the time to meet with the NAM and for sharing their views.

## II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The presidential election scheduled for 27 January 2027 will be the first since the adoption of the 2021 Constitution, which strengthened presidential powers and introduced a five-year, two-term limit. The incumbent President Sadyr Japarov is eligible to seek a further term.

The legal framework was amended several times in 2026, with changes affecting the composition and functioning of the election administration, the timing of the presidential election, voter registration and remote voting, collection of supporting signatures, campaign finance, campaigning, and media accreditation. ODIHR NAM interlocutors generally viewed the 2026 amendments as limited procedural or technical adjustments rather than broader reforms, and most interlocutors considered the legal framework to provide an adequate basis for conducting the election, while noting that longstanding shortcomings identified in previous ODIHR reports remain.

Preparations, including the training of lower-level commissions, production and distribution of election materials, voter information, and technical arrangements, are proceeding on schedule with all deadlines met to date. Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed confidence in the technical and administrative capacity of the election administration to conduct the election. The CEC has expanded its voter-education activities, including measures targeting young voters. New measures have also been introduced to monitor and improve polling-station accessibility for voters with disabilities.

Biometric voter identification and automatic ballot-scanning equipment will again be used. The CEC has begun phased testing of election technologies and communication systems. The Presidential Administration informed the ODIHR NAM that redundant secure communication lines are envisaged for the transmission of election data. ODIHR NAM interlocutors did not raise concerns regarding the planned use of election technologies and generally expressed confidence in the CEC's technical preparedness. However, previous ODIHR concerns regarding independent verification and certification

of election technologies, stakeholder access to technical documentation and audit results, and safeguards for vote secrecy remain relevant.

As of 9 November, the preliminary voter list included approximately 4.5 million voters. Voter registration is passive and based on the population register, with eligible voters automatically included in the voter lists provided they have undergone biometric registration; citizens who have not done so are not included until completing the procedure. Voters may verify and correct their data electronically or in person. Following the July 2026 amendments, voters may cast their ballot at any polling station in the country irrespective of their place of registration, with electronic safeguards intended to prevent multiple voting. The legislation retains restrictions on suffrage rights for persons deprived of legal capacity by a court decision and for prisoners serving a prison sentence, irrespective of the gravity of the offence. All ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed general confidence in the overall accuracy of voter lists.

Presidential candidates must be Kyrgyz citizens, be at least 35 years of age, hold no other citizenship, have command of the state language at the prescribed level, and have resided in Kyrgyzstan for an aggregate of at least 15 years. Persons with a criminal conviction, including an expunged conviction, and certain persons whose criminal proceedings were terminated on non-rehabilitating grounds are ineligible to stand. Candidates may be nominated by political parties or through self-nomination and must collect at least 30,000 valid voter signatures and pay an electoral deposit equivalent to KGS 1 million, which is now non-refundable. For this election, the CEC introduced electronic collection through a newly established automated system. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors considered the amount of the deposit high and expressed concern that it could constitute a barrier to candidacy.

Women remain underrepresented in national political institutions. In the current parliament, 31 of 90 deputies (34.4 per cent) are women; women comprise only 2 of 20 members (10 per cent) of the Cabinet of Ministers and 3 of the 8 members (37.5 per cent) of the CEC. By contrast, women constitute 4 of the 8 currently serving judges (50 per cent) of the Constitutional Court.

The official campaign period will run from 23 December 2026 until 26 January 2027. Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors expect a relatively subdued campaign conducted largely through social media and door-to-door canvassing. Anticipated campaign themes include economic and social issues, energy security, anti-corruption and infrastructure development. Some interlocutors referred to concerns in public debate regarding the competitiveness and fairness of the election, including the possible use of administrative resources and vote-buying, against a wider backdrop of concerns regarding restrictions affecting civic engagement and open public debate.

Campaigns may be financed from candidates' own funds, contributions from nominating political parties, and donations from individuals and legal entities, subject to statutory limits. Candidates must submit pre-election and final financial reports, and the CEC is required to publish information on electoral deposits, campaign income and expenditure, and financial reports. ODIHR NAM interlocutors did not raise specific concerns regarding the campaign-finance framework, although some noted that advantages associated with incumbency and the possible use of administrative resources could affect the level playing field. Previous ODIHR recommendations aimed at enhancing the transparency and effectiveness of campaign-finance oversight, including through clearer audit procedures, publication of audit results and proportionate sanctions, remain unaddressed.

The media landscape retains a degree of plurality, but several ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted a marked tightening of space for independent journalism and media freedom in recent years, citing limited access to funding and advertising revenues, growing pressure on independent outlets, and self-censorship. The 2025 Law on Media introduced mandatory state registration, including for online media, and limited foreign ownership to 35 per cent. Media outlets and online publications wishing to participate in pre-

election campaigning and provide political advertising are required to obtain accreditation from the CEC through a new automated accreditation system. Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors considered the accreditation requirement and comparatively early application deadline an additional administrative burden. The state-owned National TV and Radio Corporation plans to organize debates and other election-related programming and is required to provide free airtime to registered candidates.

The law provides expedited procedures for election-related complaints. Decisions of lower-level election commissions may be reviewed by higher-level commissions, and CEC decisions and actions are generally subject to judicial review. However, voters do not have standing to challenge election results, a limitation previously noted by ODIHR. The CEC maintains an electronic complaints register containing information on complaints, decisions, and related court acts, and procedures for transmitting complaints and decisions from lower-level commissions were further clarified in 2026, potentially addressing a previous ODIHR recommendation regarding the timely publication and transparency of election-related complaints and decisions.

The election law provides for citizen and international observation of all stages of the electoral process. Citizen observation is nevertheless expected to remain limited primarily due to funding constraints and the impact of legislation classifying election observation as a form of "political activity" and requiring foreign-funded organizations undertaking such activities to register as "foreign representatives". Several interlocutors expressed concern about the resulting constraints on independent citizen observation. In October 2026, the CEC approved procedures for a new Public Observation Centre, to operate for the first time on election day.

All ODIHR NAM interlocutors underlined the need for a robust ODIHR election observation presence, viewing observation as a means to promote confidence in the electoral process. While interlocutors generally expressed confidence in the capacity and technical preparedness of the election administration, they identified a number of issues warranting continued attention, including the competitiveness of the election, the conduct of the campaign, possible misuse of administrative resources, vote-buying, and the media environment. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors stressed the need for a long-term presence to cover regional aspects of the process, as well as a short-term observation component to assess voting, counting and tabulation across the country. Interlocutors also stressed the importance of assessing the participation of women, persons with disabilities and national minorities, as well as conditions for independent citizen observation.

Based on the findings in this report, the ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an Election Observation Mission (EOM) for the 27 January 2027 presidential election. In addition to a core team of analysts, ODIHR will request the secondment by OSCE participating States of 26 long-term observers to follow the electoral process countrywide, as well as 300 short-term observers to observe election day proceedings. In line with ODIHR's standard methodology, the EOM will include a media monitoring component and will assess the campaign environment and activities across traditional media, online outlets, and social media platforms. The mission will also assess institutional preparedness and effectiveness in identifying and responding to disinformation, misinformation, and potential foreign and domestic interference, as well as existing co-operation mechanisms with social media platforms.

# III. FINDINGS

## A. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

The last elections in Kyrgyzstan were the early parliamentary elections held on 30 November 2025 following the self-dissolution of the *Jogorku Kenesh* (parliament), explained as an effort to diminish the administrative and social pressures of consecutive parliamentary and presidential election campaigns under the new electoral system. Under the substantially revised electoral system, 90 deputies were elected in 30 three-member constituencies through a single non-transferable vote. The new system significantly reduced the formal role of political parties, including by limiting each party to one candidate per constituency, and nearly all candidates who were elected had stood as self-nominees.[1]

In the 2021 presidential election, which followed the annulment of the October 2020 parliamentary elections and the resignation of the president, Sadyr Japarov was elected for a six-year term. A referendum on the form of government was held concurrently, followed by a further referendum in April 2021 on a new Constitution, with 79.3 per cent of participating voters supporting its adoption. The new Constitution substantially strengthened presidential powers and set presidential terms at five years with a maximum of two terms.

In February 2026, amid public debate over the incumbent's mandate length and calls for an early presidential election, President Japarov requested the Constitutional Court's official interpretation. The Court held that his six-year mandate remains valid and counts as his first term under the two-term limit introduced by the 2021 Constitution and concluded that he remains eligible to seek a further term. The same period saw a significant political realignment following the dismissal of Kamchybek Tashiev, the long-serving head of the State Committee for National Security and a close political ally of President Japarov, and the subsequent restructuring of the security apparatus and dismissals and arrests of a number of senior officials.[2] On 24 September, the parliament scheduled the presidential election for 27 January 2027.[3]

Recent assessments by international human rights bodies and organizations have raised concerns regarding restrictions affecting freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly, including through recent legislation and its enforcement.[4] While ODIHR NAM interlocutors generally regarded the forthcoming presidential election as politically significant under the current constitutional system, several questioned the extent to which the election would be genuinely competitive, citing the narrowing space for political activity and the absence of prominent alternative political figures able to mount a nationwide campaign.

---

1 Of the 90 elected deputies, 86 had stood as self-nominees and 4 as nominees of the Yntymak political party. While formally independent, many elected deputies were widely regarded as supportive of President Japarov. Turnout in the 30 November 2025 elections was 36.9 per cent.

2 Tashiev was dismissed on 10 February 2026, one day after a group of 75 politicians, former officials and public figures called for an early presidential election amid uncertainty over President Japarov's mandate. The President stated that the dismissal was intended to prevent divisions within society and state institutions. Tashiev was subsequently prosecuted in connection with the so-called "Letter of 75" case. In July, a first-instance court convicted him and seven others of preparing a violent seizure of power and imposed a four-year suspended sentence; on 10 September, the Bishkek City Court reclassified the offence as obstruction of electoral rights and imposed two years of probation supervision. Tashiev denied wrongdoing and his defence announced intentions to appeal.

3 In April 2025, amendments to the Election Law moved regular presidential elections from October to the third Sunday of January in the year in which the incumbent president's term expires. Further amendments adopted in July 2026 changed the election day to the fourth Wednesday of January. Under the amended law, a regular presidential election must be called by the *Jogorku Kenesh* no later than four months before election day. Election day is designated a non-working day, with a working day remuneration preserved.

4 See the concluding observations on the combined 11th and 12th periodic reports of Kyrgyzstan, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UN CERD).

Women remain underrepresented in public and political life. They hold 31 of 90 seats (34.4 per cent) in the current parliament, only 2 of 20 (10 per cent) posts in the Cabinet of Ministers and represent 3 of the 8 members (37.5 per cent) of the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda (CEC). By contrast, women constitute 4 of the 8 currently serving judges (50 per cent) of the Constitutional Court.[5] Ethnic minorities remain underrepresented in political and public life, including in decision-making bodies.[6]

ODIHR has previously observed 15 elections in Kyrgyzstan.[7] Most recently, ODIHR deployed an Election Observation Mission (EOM) for the 30 November 2025 early parliamentary elections. The mission's final report contains 49 recommendations for the authorities to improve the electoral process and bring it further in line with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections.[8]

## B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The presidential election is primarily regulated by the 2021 Constitution and the 2011 Constitutional Law on the Elections of the President and Deputies of the *Jogorku Kenesh* (the election law, last amended on 28 July 2026), with relevant provisions of the 2021 Constitutional Law on the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda, the 1999 Law on Political Parties, the 2017 Administrative Procedural Code, the 2021 Code of Offences, and the 2021 Criminal Code also applicable.[9] Kyrgyzstan is a party to the principal international instruments relevant to the conduct of democratic elections.[10]

The election legislation was amended several times in 2026.[11] The amendments reduced the CEC's membership from 12 to 8 members and adjusted its decision-making procedures; revised provisions on the timing of presidential election; increased the maximum number of voters per polling station; clarified rules on voter registration and remote voting; introduced the electronic collection of supporting signatures for presidential candidates; amended requirements concerning candidate information, election funds and electoral deposits; revised the number of authorized campaign representatives; introduced additional restrictions concerning the participation of minors in campaigning; and updated procedures for the accreditation of media and internet publications. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors characterized most of the 2026 changes as limited, procedural or technical adjustments rather than

5 The Constitutional Court is composed of nine judges. One seat is vacant following the termination of the mandate of Deputy Chairperson in June 2026.

6 In its concluding observations on the combined 11th and 12th periodic reports of Kyrgyzstan, the UN CERD expressed concern about the persistently low representation of ethnic minorities in parliament, executive bodies, the judiciary and law-enforcement agencies, as well as at the local level, in particular the underrepresentation of the Uzbek minority in local councils. It recommended measures to ensure fair and equitable representation of ethnic minorities in elected bodies and decision-making positions. The 2025 Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the Universal Periodic Review of Kyrgyzstan similarly noted slow progress in increasing the representation of ethnic minorities in political bodies and decision-making positions.

7 See all previous ODIHR election-related reports on Kyrgyzstan.

8 In paragraph 25 of the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Document, OSCE participating States committed themselves "to follow up promptly the ODIHR's election assessment and recommendations".

9 Other relevant legislation includes laws regulating the media, personal data protection, peaceful assemblies and non-commercial organizations, as well as CEC regulations adopted pursuant to the election legislation.

10 Including the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and its First Optional Protocol, 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 2003 UN Convention against Corruption, and the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Kyrgyzstan has also been a member of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission since 2004.

11 See the 5 February 2026 Constitutional Law No. 11 and the 28 July 2026 Constitutional Law No. 135 amending the election law; the 16 May 2026 Constitutional Law No. 66 and the 28 July 2026 Constitutional Law No. 137 amending the Constitutional Law on the CEC.

broader reforms of the electoral framework. By contrast, the extensive amendments adopted in 2025 substantially reshaped the electoral framework.[12]

Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors considered the legal framework to provide an adequate basis for the conduct of the election, while noting that broader shortcomings also identified in previous ODIHR reports remain. A number of longstanding ODIHR recommendations remain unaddressed, including restrictions on voting and candidacy rights, the protection of fundamental freedoms in the regulation of campaigning, transparency and effective oversight of campaign finance, media freedom and campaign coverage, including media accreditation requirements, and access to effective remedies in election-related disputes. Previous recommendations concerning the misuse of administrative resources and vote-buying also remain relevant.

The president is elected for a five-year term under a two-round majority system. A candidate is elected in the first round if they receive more than half of the votes cast by voters who participated in the election; otherwise a second round between the two candidates who received the highest number of votes is held within 20 days from the determination of the first-round results, and the candidate receiving the highest number of votes is elected.[13]

## C. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The election administration comprises the CEC, 56 Territorial Election Commissions (TECs), and some 2,650 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs), including 100 polling stations abroad.[14] Following July 2026 amendments, the maximum number of voters per polling station increased from 3,000 to 4,000.[15]

The CEC is a permanent independent state body appointed for a five-year term that oversees preparations for the election in co-operation with other state and local authorities responsible for organizational, technical and logistical support.[16] Following amendments adopted in May 2026, its membership was reduced from 12 to 8 members.[17] The current CEC composition took office in June 2026, and three members are women.[18] The July 2026 amendments allowed CEC meetings to be conducted by videoconference when necessary. CEC decisions are adopted by a majority of the statutory membership.

---

12 In its 2025 Opinion on Draft Constitutional Law on Amendments to the Constitutional Law 'On Elections of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and Members of *Jogorku Kenesh* of the Kyrgyz Republic' ODIHR noted that the amendments were prepared and adopted in a condensed timeframe, limiting opportunities for meaningful public consultation and raising concerns about the inclusiveness of the legislative process.

13 The CEC must determine the first-round results within 20 days of election day. If the results are challenged, their determination is suspended pending final judicial resolution.

14 This also includes 40 additional polling stations for remote voting. The CEC plans to establish the same number of polling stations abroad as for the 2025 early parliamentary elections, based on proposals from the MFA. The CEC informed the ODIHR NAM that organizing out-of-country voting is comparatively simpler for presidential election, as the entire country forms a single nationwide constituency.

15 According to the CEC, the increase reflects confidence in PECs' capacity and is intended to accommodate internal migration to urban areas.

16 State and local authorities are required to assist election commissions in the preparation and conduct of elections. The state agency *Kyzmat* which operates under the Presidential Affairs Administration, provides population-register and voter-identification services and serves as the CEC's technical operator for the development, maintenance and modernization of election-related automated information systems.

17 Under the amended law, at least six members must be appointed for the CEC to commence its work, and six members constitute a quorum.

18 Half of the members are elected by the parliament upon nomination by the president and half on the parliament's own initiative, with no more than 70 per cent of members of either gender. Only two members of the previous CEC were retained, including the chairperson.

Preparations, including the training of lower-level commissions, production and distribution of election materials, voter information, and technical arrangements, are proceeding on schedule, with all statutory deadlines met to date. Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed confidence in the technical and administrative capacity of the election administration to conduct elections.

The CEC has expanded its voter-education activities through its Centre for Civic Education and Electoral Technologies, including through regional civic and digital education programmes.[19] According to the CEC, particular attention is being given to voters aged 18 to 35, who constitute over 40 per cent of the electorate but have a turnout rate of around 30 per cent.

TECs and PECs serve five-year terms and are appointed from among representatives nominated by political parties and representatives from reserves formed by local representative bodies, with the law providing equal representation for both categories.[20] Each political party may have no more than one representative on a commission.[21] TECs comprise at least 11 members and are appointed by the CEC, while PECs are appointed by the respective TEC and comprise at least 7, 9 or 11 members, depending on the number of voters registered in the precinct.[22] Registered candidates are also entitled to appoint representatives to election commissions.

The legal framework requires polling stations to meet the accessibility needs of voters with physical and sensory disabilities.[23] In August 2026, the CEC adopted a new regulation on ensuring the electoral rights of voters with disabilities, requiring election commissions and social-protection authorities to prepare needs maps for voters with disabilities. In October, the CEC introduced an automated system to support inter-agency data exchange and monitoring of polling-station accessibility.

## D. USE OF TECHNOLOGIES

Biometric voter identification and automatic ballot-scanning equipment have been in use since 2015.[24] The July 2026 amendments assigned responsibility for technical support for elections solely to the CEC, consolidating responsibility for operating election technologies within the election administration. The processing of personal and biometric data used for voter registration and identification is regulated by the Digital Code, which entered into force in February 2026, with compliance overseen by the State Agency for Personal Data Protection.[25]

The CEC has begun phased testing of the election technologies for the upcoming election. Tests conducted on 3 and 4 November assessed the presidential-election module, online voter identification,

---

19 In 2026, the Centre conducted a 5-month programme in all 7 regions on civic identity, electoral participation and digital literacy, which the CEC reported reached around 6,000 participants.

20 PECs were most recently formed in February and March 2025. The TECs composition cycles are not necessarily synchronized nationwide.

21 Independent members of parliament do not have a separate right to nominate election commission members. ODIHR previously noted that limited participation of political parties in nominating commission members reduced the intended pluralism of their composition.

22 PECs comprise at least 7 members in precincts with up to 500 voters, at least 9 members in precincts with 501 to 1,200 voters, and at least 11 members in precincts with more than 1,200 voters.

23 Requirements include accessible approaches, ground-floor premises or lifts, sufficiently wide doorways, ramps or assistance-call buttons, tactile indicators and adequate lighting. Where a polling station lacks the necessary adaptations, the respective PEC must request the relevant local authority to take corrective measures no later than 40 days before election day.

24 Ahead of the 2025 parliamentary elections, the CEC modernized the technological infrastructure, introducing real-time online voter identification, on-demand printing of ballots at polling stations and remote voting, while retaining automatic ballot scanning for preliminary results and a mandatory manual count for legally valid results.

25 The State Agency for Personal Data Protection informed the ODIHR NAM that the new framework draws on principles reflected in the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

remote voting, election equipment and the stability of communication channels. A nationwide test of the system was scheduled for 18 November 2026. The Presidential Affairs Administration informed the ODIHR NAM that three secure communication lines are envisaged to provide redundancy for the transmission of election data. The CEC's Information Election System uses protected communication channels, including virtual private network-enabled transmission equipment, to transfer data from polling-station equipment to the central CEC server. ODIHR NAM interlocutors did not raise concerns regarding the planned use of election technologies and generally expressed confidence in the CEC's technical preparedness. However, legislative changes did not address previous issues identified as problematic by ODIHR, including the absence of independent verification and certification of election technologies, limited stakeholder access to technical documentation and audit findings, and safeguards for the secrecy of the vote in relation to individualized quick-response (QR) codes on ballots.

## E. VOTER REGISTRATION

Citizens aged 18 or older have the right to vote. The legal framework continues to restrict suffrage rights for persons deprived of legal capacity by a court decision, including persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, at odds with international standards.[26] The legislation also retains restrictions on suffrage rights for persons serving a prison sentence, irrespective of the gravity of the offence. On 9 November, the CEC published a preliminary voter list comprising 4,467,040 voters.

Voter registration is passive and based on the population register maintained by the state agency *Kyzmat* under the Office of the President. Eligible voters who have undergone biometric registration are automatically included in the voter list. Citizens who have not undergone biometric registration are not included and must complete the procedure in order to be registered as voters. The CEC informed the ODIHR NAM that the Unified Voter Registration System, introduced in September 2026, also provides an administrative interface enabling it to monitor and analyze voter-registration data. Following July 2026 amendments, the preliminary voter list for presidential elections is published on the *Tizme* state voter portal 80 days before election day and displayed at PECs 70 days before election day.[27] Voters may verify their data online or at PECs and request corrections, including electronically through the *Tizme* portal, until 15 days before election day. The voter register is updated monthly between elections and daily during an election period. All ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed general confidence in the overall accuracy of voter lists.

Following the July 2026 amendments, voters may cast their ballot at any polling station in the country, irrespective of their place of registration.[28] No prior application is required. On election day, voters using this option are identified through the CEC information system, which records their participation.[29] The CEC stated that the arrangement is intended to facilitate voting by citizens who are away from their registered polling station on election day.

---

26 According to Articles 12 and 29 of the CRPD, "State Parties shall recognize that persons with disabilities enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life" and ensure their "right and opportunity [...] to vote and be elected". Paragraph 48 of the CRPD Committee's General Comment No. 1 to Article 12 of the CRPD states that "a person's decision-making ability cannot be a justification for any exclusion of persons with disabilities from exercising [...] the right to vote [and] the right to stand for election".

27 The July 2026 amendments also removed the previous concept of an "electoral address" from several provisions and further provided for electronic submission of voter-list correction requests, subject to identification using personal and biometric data, as well as synchronization and verification of voter-register data through the inter-agency electronic information-exchange system.

28 In August 2026, the CEC adopted procedures for remote voting in the presidential election, including its organization through CEC information systems and the establishment of remote-voting polling stations.

29 Separate lists of voters using remote voting are not prepared in advance; they are generated on election day following voter identification. The lists of voters who used remote voting are published on the *Tizme* portal within seven days.

## F. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Presidential candidates must be Kyrgyz citizens, at least 35 years of age, hold no other citizenship, have command of the state language at the prescribed level, and have resided in Kyrgyzstan for an aggregate of at least 15 years, a residence requirement that is at odds with international standards.[30] Command of the state language is demonstrated by a certificate issued following testing by an authorized state body or institution at the prescribed "Above Intermediate" level. Following 2025 amendments, persons with a criminal conviction, including an expunged conviction, and certain persons whose criminal proceedings were terminated on non-rehabilitating grounds are ineligible to stand for election; ODIHR has previously raised concerns that such blanket restrictions may be disproportionate and undermine the right to rehabilitation. Candidates holding certain state or municipal political offices, or heading state or municipal enterprises and institutions, must cease exercising their official duties upon nomination, while civil servants, municipal employees and media workers standing as candidates must suspend their duties until the election results are determined.[31]

Candidates may be nominated by political parties or through self-nomination and must collect at least 30,000 valid voter signatures, with no more than 60,000 signatures submitted, and pay an electoral deposit of 10,000 calculation indices equivalent to 1 million Kyrgyz som (KGS).[32] Unlike in the last presidential election, the electoral deposit is no longer refundable and is transferred to the state budget irrespective of the candidate's electoral result.[33] Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors considered the amount of the electoral deposit to be high and expressed concern that it could constitute a barrier to candidacy. Following the July 2026 amendments, supporting signatures may be collected either on paper or digitally. For this election, the CEC introduced electronic collection through the Automated Information System "Signature Collection" using the state *Tündük* portal, where voters are authenticated before expressing their support.[34]

Prospective candidates had to submit nomination applications until 13 November 2026. By the deadline, 11 prospective candidates had submitted nominations, of whom 1 is a woman.

## G. ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The official campaign period starts after the registration deadline expires for all candidates and ends 24 hours before voting begins. For the presidential election, campaigning is scheduled from 23 December 2026 until 08:00 on 26 January 2027. Election commissions oversee compliance with campaign rules and are mandated to take measures to address violations.

The law guarantees candidates equal campaign opportunities and permits campaigning through the media, public events and the production and distribution of campaign materials, as well as through other

30 Paragraph 15 of the UN CCPR General Comment 25 states that "any restrictions on the right to stand for election, such as minimum age, must be justifiable on objective and reasonable criteria. Persons who are otherwise eligible to stand for election should not be excluded by unreasonable or discriminatory requirements such as education, residence or descent, or by reason of political affiliation". See also paragraph 24 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document and sections I.1.1.c.iii. and 1.1.iv of the Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters.

31 The incumbent president and members of parliament are exempt from the requirement to cease exercising their official duties. The law also bars religious figures from standing for five years after terminating or suspending their religious activity.

32 Unlike for parliamentary elections, the law does not provide for a reduced electoral deposit for candidates with physical disabilities. EUR 1 equals to KGS 98.

33 Under the rules applicable to the 2021 presidential election, the deposit was returned, *inter alia*, to candidates who received at least one per cent of the votes and submitted the required financial report.

34 The CEC verifies the submitted signatures within 10 days with the involvement of the population-registration authorities. Voters may support more than one candidate.

forms not prohibited by law. While online campaigning is not regulated through separate legislation, general campaign rules apply. State and municipal civil servants, certain holders of state and municipal political office, members of election commissions, observers, religious figures, foreign citizens and organizations among others, are prohibited from campaigning.[35] Candidates, their close relatives, spouses and representatives may not engage in charitable activities from the calling of the election until publication of the results.

The July 2026 amendments changed the organization of campaigning by replacing the previous limit of 1,000 contracted campaigners per candidate with a limit of 3 campaigners per polling station. Candidates are required to maintain a register of campaigners and regularly provide updated information to the CEC. The law requires at least one per cent of campaign materials to be made available in accessible formats for voters with disabilities, including through sign language interpretation or subtitling, enlarged print, Braille, or other appropriate means.[36]

Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors expected a relatively subdued campaign, conducted largely through social media and door-to-door canvassing, and noted that clear campaign narratives had not yet fully emerged. At the same time, several interlocutors expected economic development and the next five-year programme, energy security and electricity shortages, anti-corruption efforts and the recovery of state assets, social policy and living standards, and infrastructure and modernization to feature prominently. Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted concerns about the competitiveness and fairness of the election, including the possible use of administrative resources and vote-buying, as well as about the broader environment for civic engagement and open public debate.[37]

## H. CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Campaign finance is primarily regulated by the election law and CEC regulations. On 23 September 2026, the CEC adopted a regulation governing the formation, accounting, expenditure, reporting and oversight of presidential candidates' election funds. The legal framework provides sanctions for campaign-finance violations, including deregistration in cases where expenditure outside the election fund exceeds the statutory threshold, and prohibits certain forms and sources of anonymous financing.[38] It does not, however, establish a separate comprehensive regime for independent third-party campaigning or expenditure.

Campaigns may be financed from candidates' own funds, contributions from nominating political parties, and voluntary donations from individuals and legal entities. A candidate may contribute up to KGS 15 million, while a nominating political party may contribute up to KGS 50 million. Donations

---

35 An incumbent president standing for re-election is not required to suspend official duties, but remains subject to the prohibition on misuse of public office and administrative resources for campaign purposes.

36 Russian Sign Language is widely used by deaf and hard-of-hearing persons in Kyrgyzstan.

37 On 25 September, President Japarov issued a decree instructing state and municipal bodies to ensure equal conditions for contestants and prohibiting the use of administrative resources and the involvement of public-sector employees in campaigning.

38 Financial or material support aimed at promoting a candidate must be channeled through the candidate's election fund; free or unjustifiably discounted election-related goods and services are prohibited, and campaign expenditure, including for online and social-media advertising, must be paid from the election fund. In-kind contributions remain prohibited, despite previous ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations that individuals should be able to support contestants through financial and in-kind contributions within reasonable limits. A candidate's registration is cancelled if expenditure outside the election fund exceeds 0.5 per cent of the amount actually received into the fund, or if expenditure from the fund exceeds the statutory ceiling by more than 0.5 per cent.

from individuals and legal entities are each limited to KGS 50 million per donation.[39] The total amount of funds received and spent by a candidate may not exceed KGS 200 million. In the event of a second round, the spending limit may be increased by 50 per cent.

Under the July 2026 amendments, a prospective presidential candidate, or a political party intending to nominate a candidate, must establish an election fund with one dedicated bank account for all campaign-related transactions before submitting nomination documents. For the 2027 presidential election, the CEC designated state-owned banks, Eldik Bank and ABank, to service candidates' election-fund accounts. The 2026 regulation also permits transactions through remote banking services and approved mobile banking applications, provided that donors are identifiable, while transfers through non-identifiable payment systems remain prohibited. The election legislation does not explicitly regulate virtual assets, including cryptocurrencies, in the context of campaign finance.[40]

The CEC oversees compliance with campaign-finance rules through its Control and Audit Group (CRG), established for the election period and comprising at least seven members. The CRG verifies the sources, accounting, and use of candidates' election funds, checks financial reports against bank data and primary financial documentation, may conduct inspections and consider campaign-finance complaints, and prepares draft CEC decisions following its reviews. Candidates must submit an interim report no later than ten days before election day and a final report no later than ten days after election day, both electronically and in signed paper form. The CRG verifies candidates' financial reports, while the CEC is required to publish information on campaign income and expenditure, financial reports and electoral deposits on its website. The regulations do not establish a specific deadline for publication, leaving the format and frequency of updates to the CEC's discretion.

Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors did not raise specific concerns regarding the campaign finance framework, although some noted that advantages associated with incumbency and the possible use of administrative resources could affect the level playing field. Still, previous ODIHR recommendations aimed at enhancing the transparency and effectiveness of campaign-finance oversight, including through clearer audit procedures, publication of audit results and proportionate sanctions, remain unaddressed.

## I. MEDIA

The media landscape retains a degree of plurality, but several ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted how the environment has seen a marked tightening of space for independent journalism and media freedom in recent years. They pointed to limited access to funding and advertising revenues, growing pressure on independent outlets, and self-censorship. In 2025, several independent media outlets and journalists were subject to criminal or administrative proceedings; in October, *Kloop*, *Temirov Live* and *Ait Ait Dese* were designated as extremist and banned, while *Aprel TV* was closed earlier this year.[41]

The legal framework provides constitutional guarantees for freedom of expression and access to information. The 2025 Law on Media introduced mandatory state registration, including for online media, and limits foreign ownership to 35 per cent. Administrative liability also applies to defamation, insult, and dissemination of false information. Concerns remain regarding the impact of these provisions

---

39 The limits are established in multiples of the calculation index applicable on the day the election is called: 150,000 indices for a candidate's own funds, 500,000 indices for party contributions and each individual or legal-entity donation, and 2 million indices for the overall election-fund ceiling.

40 Virtual assets are legal and regulated in Kyrgyzstan under the 2022 Law on Virtual Assets. The law provides that virtual assets are not a means of payment or a monetary unit. In 2026, the authorities established the National Agency for Virtual Assets and Blockchain Technologies as the specialized regulatory body for the sector.

41 In the 2025 World Press Freedom Index, Reporters Without Borders ranked Kyrgyzstan 144th of 180 countries, compared with 79th in 2021.

on media freedom and the ability of independent outlets to operate.[42] Social media plays a central role in access to news and political information. Since 2025, international internet traffic has been routed through the state-owned *ElKat* company under a temporary state monopoly, increasing control over the country's internet infrastructure and raising concerns regarding the authorities' technical ability to monitor or restrict access to online content.[43]

The state-owned National TV and Radio Corporation of Kyrgyzstan (NTRK) operates six nationwide television channels, four national radio stations and seven regional channels. Since 2022, NTRK has operated as a state institution under executive control; its Director General is appointed and dismissed by the President, and it does not have an independent supervisory body. By law, state broadcasters must provide at least one hour of free airtime on working days, distributed equally among registered candidates participating in the broadcast, with at least half of this time reserved for debates and other joint campaign formats. NTRK informed the ODIHR NAM that it plans to organize debates and provide informative and expert election programmes tailored to different target groups. NTRK also stated that all election-related programming includes accessibility measures for persons with disabilities, such as sign language interpretation and subtitling.

Media outlets and online publications wishing to participate in pre-election campaigning and provide political advertising are required to obtain accreditation from the CEC.[44] In September 2026, the CEC adopted a new regulation introducing a specialized automated system for media accreditation, replacing the previous procedure adopted in August 2025.[45] Applications, verification, review, and publication of accreditation information are now processed electronically, with the system also maintaining a public digital register and the history of individual applications. Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concern that the accreditation requirement, including the comparatively early application deadline, could place an additional administrative burden on media outlets.[46] On 16 October, the CEC accredited 81 media outlets for participation in the election campaign, including 19 print media outlets, 22 television broadcasters, 13 radio stations, and 27 online media outlets.

Public and private media may provide paid campaign airtime and space if on an equal basis and at rates not exceeding those charged during the six months preceding the calling of the election. The law prohibits the publication of knowingly false information damaging the honour, dignity or business reputation of candidates and political parties. Publication of opinion polls, election forecasts and other election-related research is prohibited during the last five days before election day and on election day.

---

42 The 2025 Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the Universal Periodic Review of Kyrgyzstan noted concerns regarding "barriers created by the proposed mandatory registration of mass media outlets, and restrictions on content, foreign media and ownership". It also recalled the UN Human Rights Committee's recommendation to "[r]eview the Law on Protection from Unreliable (False) Information and ensure effective safeguards and judicial overview of all decisions on blocking media resources". In its concluding observations on the combined 11th and 12th periodic reports of Kyrgyzstan, the UN CERD also expressed concern at reports of increasing intimidation, surveillance, harassment, threats, reprisals and arbitrary arrest or detention of journalists and other civil society actors.

43 See Freedom House Freedom on the Net 2026.

44 See the 2023 ODIHR and OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Interim Joint Opinion on the Draft Law on the Mass Media, which recommended, *inter alia*, excluding print and online media from compulsory registration, limiting restrictions on foreign ownership to those that are justified and proportionate, and considering the establishment of an independent media regulatory body. The Law on Mass Media was adopted by the Jogorku Kenesh on 25 June 2025 and signed by the President on 6 August 2025.

45 Under the new regulation, the deadline is generally 20 calendar days from the official publication of the decision calling the election. The CEC must then decide on accreditation within five calendar days.

46 The 2025 OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Central Asia Media Conference recommended that participating States "ensure transparent, non-discriminatory accreditation procedures for domestic and foreign media - free from administrative barriers and political pressure." It also recommended aligning media registration requirements with international standards to prevent undue restrictions on freedoms of expression and media.

The CEC oversees compliance with election legislation, including campaign rules in the media. Its Working Group on Voter Information and Campaigning monitors possible violations by candidates, political parties, media and online outlets, including campaign activity on social media and other online platforms.[47] The CEC may initiate proceedings or refer violations to the competent authorities and, under the 2026 accreditation regulation, may revoke a media outlet's accreditation for violations of election legislation, including repeated violations. The regulation does not differentiate sanctions according to the gravity of a violation. During the 2025 parliamentary elections, the CEC did not conduct systematic media monitoring, with its campaign working group overseeing compliance mainly on the basis of notifications and complaints.

## J. ELECTION DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Election commissions and the courts handle election disputes, with the decisions of lower-level election commission subject to review by the respective higher-level commission. Most CEC decisions and actions are subject to judicial review, but some are exempt, and the law does not clearly specify the conditions for such exemptions. Following the 2025 amendments, political parties no longer have standing to challenge election results, and as previously noted by ODIHR and contrary to international standards, voters are also unable to contest election results; such challenges may only be brought by candidates, their representatives, and observers.[48] Further, previous ODIHR recommendations to broaden standing in election-result disputes, clarify which CEC decisions are subject to judicial review, and strengthen access to effective legal remedy remain unaddressed. In August 2026, the CEC adopted a regulation establishing working groups at the CEC and lower-level election commissions for the preliminary consideration of election-related complaints.[49]

The CEC maintains an electronic complaints register containing information on complaints submitted to election commissions, their status, decisions, and related court actions. The CEC also operates a Co-ordination Group for Operational Response, comprised of CEC members and staff together with representatives of the prosecutor's office, internal affairs bodies and national security authorities and mandated to facilitate prompt inter-agency responses to reported election violations and to inform the public about measures taken.

## K. CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS

The election law provides for observation of all stages of the electoral process by candidate, citizen and international observers. Citizen election observation is expected to remain limited primarily due to funding constraints and the impact of the 2024 amendments to the Law on Non-Commercial Organizations, which classify election observation as a form of "political activity" and require foreign-funded CSOs undertaking such activities to register as "foreign representatives". Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concern about the resulting constraints on independent citizen observation. CSOs met by the ODIHR NAM had not yet finalized their observation plans, noting that the scale of any

---

47 On 21 October 2026, the CEC stated that its Working Group would "continue monitoring social networks" and reported that it had already reviewed materials published online for possible premature campaigning in connection with the presidential election.

48 Complaints must be filed within three calendar days and are normally decided within three days, or within five days where additional verification is required. CEC decisions are reviewed at first instance by the Administrative Court of Bishkek. Appeals against first-instance court decisions must be filed within three days and are considered by the Supreme Court within five days. Article 2.3 of the ICCPR states that "[a]ll persons whose rights or freedoms are violated shall have an effective remedy […]"; see also paragraph 5.10 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.

49 The legislation provides that working-group meetings are conducted on the basis of open discussion and that the parties concerned must be notified of the time and place of consideration.

deployment would largely depend on the availability of funding. During the 2025 parliamentary elections, citizen observation was almost absent, and the CEC accredited only two citizen organizations, each deploying one observer.

In October 2026, the CEC approved procedures for a new Public Observation Centre, which will operate on election day and provide citizens, media, observers and other interested persons with access to live video feeds from polling stations equipped for video transmission.[50]

## IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All ODIHR NAM interlocutors underlined the need for a robust ODIHR election observation presence, viewing observation as a means to promote confidence in the electoral process. While interlocutors generally expressed confidence in the capacity and technical preparedness of the election administration, they identified a number of issues warranting continued attention, including the competitiveness of the election, the conduct of the campaign, potential misuse of administrative resources, vote-buying, and the media environment. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors stressed the need for a long-term presence to cover regional aspects of the process, as well as a short-term observation component to assess voting, counting and tabulation across the country. Interlocutors also stressed the importance of assessing the participation of women, persons with disabilities and national minorities, as well as conditions for independent citizen observation.

Based on the findings in this report, the ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an Election Observation Mission (EOM) for the 27 January 2027 presidential election. In addition to a core team of analysts, ODIHR will request the secondment by OSCE participating States of 26 long-term observers to follow the electoral process countrywide, as well as 300 short-term observers to observe election day proceedings. In line with ODIHR's standard methodology, the EOM will include a media monitoring component and will assess the campaign environment and activities across traditional media, online outlets, and social media platforms. The mission will also assess institutional preparedness and effectiveness in identifying and responding to disinformation, misinformation, and potential foreign and domestic interference, as well as existing co-operation mechanisms with social media platforms.

[50] According to the CEC, visitors will be required to register and will be subject to rules prohibiting campaigning, interference with equipment and any attempt to determine the content of an individual voter's choice.

## ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs**
Chubak Omorov, First Secretary of the Consular Department
Bekzhan Turdumambetov, Third Secretary of the Department for International Organizations

**Central Commission for Elections and Referenda**
Leila Lurova, Deputy Chairperson
Nargiza Mansurova-Yabuta, Press Secretary
Aidana Zhupueva, Head of the Electoral Process Organization Department
Askar Akimbaev, Head of the Information and Communication Technologies Department
Anara Beishembaeva, Director, Centre for Civic Education and Electoral Technologies
Almaz Konutaev, Head of the Legal Support Department
Rustam Alymbaev, Head of the Information Support Sector
Munara Amangeldi, Head of the Control and Audit Group
Azamat Eshbaev, Officer Responsible for Corruption Prevention
Azamat Zakirov, Expert, Legal Support Department
Nurkyz Tursunbaeva, Expert, International Co-operation Sector

***Jogorku Kenesh* of the Kyrgyz Republic**
Natalia Nikitenko, Director, Center for the Development of Parliament and Democracy

**Informatization and Telecommunications Department of the Presidential Affairs Administration**
Ruslan Kataganov, Head of the Digitalization Sector
Taalaybek Mambetakunov, Officer, Digitalization Sector
Zhyldyz Beishenalieva, Officer, Department of Informatization and Telecommunications

**State Agency *Kyzmat* under the Presidential Affairs Administration**
Ainura Zamirbekova, Project Manager
Nadyrbek Absamatov, Monitoring and Organizational Work Department
Elmira Kashkumbaeva, Leading Specialist, International Cooperation Department
Aelita Mukambaeva, IT Analyst

**State Agency for Personal Data Protection**
Kylymbek Madalbekov, Deputy Director
Dayana Tursunbaeva, Head of Legal Department
Tolkunbek Kubatbekov, Head of International Department

**Office of the Ombudsperson**
Akbar Amanov, Head of the International Department
Chyngyz Doronbekov, Head of the Civil and Political Rights Department
Nurdin Joldoshbekov, Civil and Political Rights Expert
Aynara Rashid kyzy, Officer, International Department

**Media and Civil Society Organizations**
***National Television and Radio Broadcasting Corporation***
Ulanbek Satiev, Director General
Bakhtiyar Tukeev, General Producer
Bakytbek Skybaev, Producer of Information and Political Programmes
Talas Adylbaev, Head of the International Department
Other representatives of media and civil society organisations

## International Community

Ambassador Volker Frobarth, Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek
John DiPirro, Senior Political Advisor, OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek
Bermet Imanalieva, Political Associate, OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek
Jannat Soronbaeva, National Democratic Institutions Officer, OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek
Representatives of diplomatic missions of Czechia, Estonia, the European Union, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Slovenia, Switzerland, and the United States of America.[51]

[51] The ODIHR NAM extended an invitation to representations of all OSCE participating States resident in Kyrgyzstan.