

S t a t e m e n t
on the Helsinki Commission's briefing titled
"Democracy in Tajikistan: Preview of the Presidential Election" on October 26, 2006

The Republic of Tajikistan is a sovereign, democratic, rule of law, secular state. A head of the country is a president. The president is elected in a democratic, free, fair, direct and general election for the term of 7 years. According to the Constitutional Law "On the Election of the President of Tajikistan" from 1999, any citizen of Tajikistan, who is 35 years old, speaks the official language, and has the residency of the country for the past 10 years, can be nominated for Presidency. When more than half of voters vote for a candidate, the president is considered to be elected.

There are 8 legal political parties;

- **Agrarian Party**
- **Party of Economic Reforms**
- **People Democratic Party**
- **Social Democratic Party**
- **Communist Party**
- **Party of Islamic Renaissance**
- **Socialist Party**
- **Democratic Party**

Five candidates are racing for the upcoming presidential election on November 6th.

- The Party of Economic Reforms nominated candidate **Olimjon Boboyev** (was born on January 5, 1952 in Hissar citi), Head of the Tajik Transportation Institute, academician.
- The Tajik Socialist Party nominated **Abduhalim Gafforov** (was born on December 24, 1951 in Panjakent district of the Sogd region), Director of the Professional Skills Upgrade Center for tutors, candidate of pedagogical science.
- **Amir Karakulov** (was born on July 15, 1942 in Surkhandarya region of the Republic of Uzbekistan), Director of a Research Center nominated by the Agrarian Party, academician.
- **E. Rahmonov** (was born on October 5, 1952 in Khatlon region) is a candidate from the Peoples Democratic Party.
- And **Ismail Talbakov** (was born on March 24, 1955 in Khatlon Region) was nominated by the Communist Party.

Some political parties, like Social Democratic Party is boycotting the election and the Party of Islamic Renaissance is not nominating its candidate and doesn't support any nominee. But, they will observe the election and their members would participate in voting process at the election.

There are 68 electoral districts in Autonomous Region of Kuhistoni Badakhshon, Sogd Region, Khatlon Region, the Districts under the Republican Authority, and capital city Dushanbe. All together, they are in 18 cities, 48 town, 46 districts, and 280 communities across the country. Among those, there are 3,060 established polling stations across Tajikistan. Also, there will be 26 polling stations abroad, including two in Washington and New York.

Of the total, Tajikistan population of **7,320,815**, there are **3,155,321** registered voters age 18 or older.

The law also guarantees to all political parties, unions, and other public organizations, movements, and to the citizens of Tajikistan the right to agitate in favor or against any candidate in Tajikistan.

Candidates can be nominated by registered political parties, federations of independent unions, the youth union of Tajikistan, and by Majlises - the local legislation bodies in the regions.

In order to be registered, a nominated candidate must collect 160,000 signatures, equivalent of 5 % of voters. Every candidate may have around 15 registered representatives, who are in charge of his or her election campaign.

The Constitutional Law “On the Election of the President of Tajikistan” and the law “On television and radio translation” guarantee the free and equal access to TV and Radio stations.

According to the Article 5 and 12 of The Constitutional Law “On the Election of the President of Tajikistan” every candidate has certain amount of time for debates and advertisements.

The state budget allocates around 3, 600 somoni for every candidate. Moreover, political parties, unions and other public organizations, movements and the citizens of Tajikistan have the right to found candidates around 100,000 somonies for election campaign.

OBSERVERS; It is expected that around 700 foreign and 18,000 local observers would observe the election. In this election, the OSCE is registered as an observer, and they would have around 30 Long term and 100 short term observers from 18 OSCE m.s.

In addition, CIS Secretariat will have an observing team, which would include Secretary of Executive Committee of CIS. And, also various international, nongovernmental election organizations, including IFES, would have their observers present on the election day. Actually, IFES is observing the election process at the embassy of Tajikistan here in DC, too.

We believe that authorities in Tajikistan have done whatever is possible to create equal conditions for all candidates during the campaign process. Despite some criticism for small mistakes, the Presidential Election is a big step forward at the democratization process of Tajikistan. If you compare this election with the past elections, you can see many positive differences, which means we are on the right path and direction.

More than **78%** of Tajikistan's citizens said that the Government of Tajikistan can improve the lives of citizens, while in 1996, only **48%** thought the same way. It shows again that the last decade's political development is positive. From election to election, from mistakes to lessons, not only political parties gained more experience of elections campaigns, but also the Government structures at all levels have learned how to conduct free and fair elections.

As one of the pillars of democratic society, there are many government and privately controlled media, like print media outlets, state and private television and radio stations in Tajikistan. In addition to state TV, approximately 18 private television stations operate in the country, which broadcast independent and uncensored programs. Recently, the Ministry of justice registered two new radio and three TV stations. International media is legal and allowed to Tajikistan, and foreign newspapers are freely distributed, including rebroadcasts of foreign television and radio programs.

Around 400 newspapers published in Tajikistan. According “Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2006” by “Reporters without borders” from October 23, 2006, Tajikistan take a visible place about press freedom

and stay before some CIS countries like Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus and Turkmenistan.

All in all, the Presidential Election of 2006 is another positive step toward the victory of democracy in Tajikistan, and we would have fair and free election.

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