# Joint Statement of Three Domestic Observer Organizations

On 7 January 2008 domestic observer organizations released a joint statement in which they emphasized the importance of post polling day procedures, such as consideration of election related appeals and final summarization of election results (including counting of votes cast through additional voter lists). They called these procedures just as important in the election process as the pre-election period and polling day itself. Accordingly, the four organizations called on the Central Election Commission (CEC) to administer these procedures transparently and in full compliance with the legal requirements. Nevertheless, the developments after 7

January clearly showed that the CEC fell short in this regard: votes cast through additional lists were counted and summed up chaotically and with legal infringements, appeals were not considered thoroughly (the vast majority were turned town on the grounds of technical errors in the appeal forms), and in the end the final election results were announced without addressing the significant concerns and violations brought up throughout the election process.

On 10 January 2008 on Rustavi 2 TV, the CEC chairperson stated that the 5 January election was □□□□□□□□□ democratic, maximally transparent, and maximally fair. A□ Georgian observer organizations do not agree with this assessment and once again point out that the final assessment of this election will by influenced by the post polling day developments up to this date and in the coming days. None of the domestic or foreign and international observer missions have said that the 5 January election was conducted in full compliance with democratic and international principles. The evaluations said the following: □□□□□ the 5 January 2008 extraordinary presidential election in Georgia was in essence consistent with most OSCE and Council of Europe commitments and standards for democratic elections, significant challenges were revealed which need to be addressed urgently A (International Election Observation Mission, IEOM of OSCE/ODIHR, European Parliament, Council of Europe, and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly); □□□ aspects of Georgia □□ January 5 presidential election were in line with democratic principles, but there also were flaws in the process A (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, NDI); □□□□□□□□ ENEMO observers registered a number of different infringements on this stage, violations during voting process were not systematic... Given the wide range of problems observed during the counting at polling stations, and considering the visible fraud attempts, ENEMO assesses that the counting process was the most deficient part of Election Day, and might adversely affect the way the results of the election are perceived A (European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations, ENEMO). These evaluations were made on 6 and 7 January and they referred to the polling day procedures. Final evaluations will be made after the finalization of the results.

Georgian Young Lawyers □ Association, International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy and Transparency International Georgia once again call all state institutions involved in the election process to act responsibly and show their commitment to ensuring the rule of law and respecting the will of Georgian voters.

Today the responsibility for safeguarding a stable environment in the country falls first upon the CEC and then upon the judiciary, executive government, and political parties.

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