



GEORGIA'S 2016 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS: WHAT TO EXPECT?

Georgia is gearing up for parliamentary elections on 8 October 2016, set to mark another milestone in the consolidation of Georgia's democracy. Here what you should know about the vote:

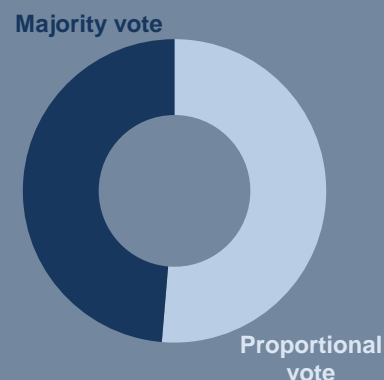
- The vote is expected to be **free and fair**. Since the first peaceful transfer of power in the country's history in 2012 and following comprehensive democratic reforms, Georgia has held two nationwide elections, presidential (2013) and municipal (2014), judged free and fair by international observers. The pre-electoral environment is "[very calm and peaceful](#)".
- The elections are expected to be **highly contested, competitive and pluralistic**. They are also garnering much debate thanks to media freedom and pluralism. According to [MediaMonitor.ge](#), co-sponsored by the EU and the UNDP, the pre-electoral media environment is balanced and ethically sound.
- The vote will be **transparent**, thanks to the presence of a wide variety of NGOs and international short and long-term observers.
- They will bring in a **new Parliament with strengthened powers** as compared to 2012, thanks to constitutional reforms making government more accountable to the legislature.
- All major political parties support Georgia's **continued European and Euro-Atlantic integration** path.

Georgia's electoral system: How does it work?

150 members of the unicameral Parliament will be elected by two methods:

- 77 by proportional representation in a single nationwide constituency with a threshold of 5%,
- 73 by first-past-the-post in single-member constituencies, with a 50% threshold (so expect run-offs).

MPs are elected for a 4 year term (next elections will be held in 2020).



What has changed since 2012?

Georgia has made remarkable progress across global rankings for democracy and freedom, rule of law and good governance, including those of [Freedom House](#), [Reporters Without Borders](#), [World Justice Project](#), [World Economic Forum](#), [World Bank](#), etc.), thanks to the government's ambitious and comprehensive reform programme.

Reforms undertaken since 2012 to bring Georgia's electoral democracy in line with the highest international standards (as defined and confirmed by the [OSCE/ODIHR](#) and [Venice Commission](#)), include:

Ensuring fair representation by:

- ✓ Establishing a regional proportional system; and proportionally redrawing electoral districts;
- ✓ Raising the voting threshold for majoritarian seats from 30% to 50%;
- ✓ Boosting equal participation, e.g. by incentivising gender-balanced electoral lists.

Ensuring good governance and effective electoral process management by:

- ✓ Reforming the Central Electoral Commission;
- ✓ Creating an Inter-Agency Task Force on Free and Fair Elections;
- ✓ Creating an Inter-Party Working Group on electoral process under the PM.

Ensuring a fair vote by:

- ✓ Ensuring that state resources are not used for electoral purposes;
- ✓ Upgrading electoral lists to prevent fraud;
- ✓ Guaranteeing freedom of assembly, political activity, expression and the media (also fair media coverage with new "must carry" rules);
- ✓ Abolishing military polling stations.

Ensuring an inclusive vote by:

- ✓ Gender mainstreaming electoral policies and implementing inclusion policies for minorities;
- ✓ Reviewing the list of disabled voters and implementing voting facilitation measures.

Who will be there to observe?

- OSCE/ODIHR (12 experts, 26 long-term observers + 350 monitors).
- OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (delegation of +/- 50 representatives + staff).
- European Parliament (delegation of 7 MEPs + staff).
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe ([delegation](#) of 32 representatives + 3 staff).
- 50+ domestic NGOs (including [Transparency International Georgia](#), [International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy](#), [Georgian Young Lawyers' Association](#)).
- Over 25 international NGOs (including [National Democratic Institute](#), [International Foundation for Electoral Systems](#), [International Republican Institute](#), [International Society for Human Rights](#)).



PM Kvirikashvili [statement](#) on the electoral environment:

The Government of Georgia is committed to ensuring "equal opportunities for every candidate, avoiding any preferences and creating a level playing field in the run-up to the election".

Useful links:

[Government of Georgia](#) | [Election Administration of Georgia](#) | [OSCE Observation Mission to Georgia](#)

Administration of the Government of Georgia
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