

**DOMESTIC MONITORING STATEMENTS
FOR THE OCTOBER 2000 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS
FROM THE KOSOVA ACTION FOR CIVIC INITIATIVE (KACI) AND
THE COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND
FREEDOMS (CDHRF)**

November 7, 2000

The National Democratic for International Affairs (NDI) has been working in Kosovo since November 1999. The Institute's programs focus on political party development, civic education and citizen participation, and domestic nonpartisan election monitoring.

In the run-up to the October 2000 municipal elections, NDI assisted two domestic monitoring groups, the Kosova Action for Civic Initiative (KACI) and the Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms (CDHRF), which were assembling a network of individuals and local nongovernmental organizations to monitor the elections. Both organizations received training from NDI and mobilized more than 1,200 domestic monitors to monitor all 30 municipalities.

With NDI's technical assistance, KACI and CDHRF released preliminary election statements and also conducted a parallel vote tabulation (PVT). The PVT, which provided the media and public with non-partisan preliminary results less than 18 hours after the polls closed, was crucial in building public confidence in the election outcome. The OSCE released no figures until more than 48 hours after the voting ended.

In addition to working with domestic monitors, NDI trained hundreds of political party pollwatchers in a "train the trainers" format. On election day, 4,000 political party pollwatchers turned out to monitor the vote, allowing parties to produce their own vote tallies, which tracked closely both the NGO numbers and OSCE's results.

Below please find the Kosova Action for Civic Initiative (KACI) and the Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms (CDHRF) election observation statements.

Kosova Action for Civic Initiative Election Observation Statement

Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms Election Observation Statement

For more information on NDI's activities in Kosovo, please contact the NDI Kosovo Program at (202) 328-3136 or by email.

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KACI LOCAL ELECTION MONITORING CENTRE , PRISHTINA

As a result of observations by 500 field staff in 15 municipalities, as well as close monitoring of the overall elections process we can report these preliminary findings:

1. There was overwhelming support by the Kosova Albanian population for these elections. Their commitment to exercising the right to vote in a peaceful, democratic manner was successfully displayed.
2. Serious logistical problems caused delays to the start of electoral process and continued to plague its course until their late close. There was an overall sense of lack of organisation and it is evident the process had not been thought through carefully enough by the OSCE as organisers.

(i) One Polling Station was expected to facilitate the voting of approximately 700 people in a period of 12 hours. This is a period of 720 minutes leaving approximately 1 minute for each person to cast their vote. At the best of times this process lasted 10 minutes. This is proof evident that the planning was poor at best and negligent in the worst of cases.

(ii) There were also serious breaches of security such as counting staff wielding pens while sorting the ballots, opening the possibility of damaging and thus annulling votes; unsupervised transportation and movement of ballots; lack of key commission members during the times of opening and closing of the Polling Centres

Other problems include:

- i.** failure to deliver sensitive materials including ballots and electoral rolls to many polling centres in time for the opening of polling stations at 7.00.
- ii.** this led to a delay in the opening times of some polling stations. Due to these it took 3 hours for the first ballot to be cast in a Polling Centre in the Ferizaj municipality.
- iii.** there are widespread reports that helpdesks were not available in many polling centres and in at least one key polling centre in Prishtina. No helpdesk or information was provided to assist huge crowds of voters.

iv. serious administrative problems caused significant delays to the electoral process throughout the day.

These include:

i. complicated identification proceedings, using a complex numerical system, meant that voters were processed extremely slowly (in some stations, less than 15 voters per hour).

ii. under-trained polling station staff and supervisors had little or no experience of implementing the system, which further contributed to delays.

1. The combination of delays led to almost all voters having to wait for significant periods of time to cast their vote. Waits of up to 3 hours were common and, at one station in rural Gjakova people had been waiting for 7 hours, outdoors in the cold and with no electricity. It is fortunate that the weather was good and that voters were generally in a patient good-humour about the delay.

2. The combination of delays caused serious crowd problems in many polling stations. It is noted that:

i. people were often queuing in large crowds, leading to many reports of crushing and broken windows in one place.

ii. there were several reports of a failure by security agencies (KFOR, CivPol, KPS) to exercise proper crowd control

iii. crowd problems caused at least one polling centre to be temporarily closed and Special Forces were called to calm proceedings in at least 2 large polling centres.

iv. almost all polling centres had significant numbers of people who were still waiting to vote when polling centres closed at 19.00. As a result many voters were denied the possibility voting.

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THE MONITORING OF THE ELECTION DAY

The Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms, the Centre for the Protection of Women and Children, Kosova Helsinki Committee, Norma and the Red Cross of Kosova, appointed 740 observers in 15 municipalities throughout Kosova to monitor the municipal elections, which were held on 28 October, 2000.

In more than 70% of the cases the polling stations failed to open on time at 7 a.m. This resulted in large crowds of people queuing in front of the polling centres. The delay was due to the negligence of the organizers and the fact that most of the voting materials were not ready.

740 CDHRF-observers monitored the regularity of the elections in 15 municipalities throughout Kosova. The observers reported on a number of irregularities during the elections. Many polling stations failed to open on time. There were cases when the polling stations opened after 8 a.m. Therefore, there were large crowds of people queuing in front of the polling stations.

At 7 a.m., there were some 2500 people queuing in front of the polling station 1911 (Ismail Qemali Primary School in Prishtina). The voting began at about 8 a.m. Since the very beginning there were problems. The help desk officer failed to tell the voters where they were supposed to go. Thus, a large number of people were moving from

one voting station to the other not knowing where to go.

There were also problems with the final list of voters, which appeared to be incomplete. Thus, the queues of those waiting in front of the polling stations grew longer and longer. Some people had to wait for 30 minutes or more to find their names in the final list of voters.

There were also many cases when there was also a lack of coordination between the queue controller and the members of the voting committee. There were periods of time when there were no voters at certain polling stations. At the very same time there were thousands of people waiting out of the polling centres.

CDHRF has remarks with regard to the voting of the members of the KPS, which was held on 24 October. We consider that their votes were to be counted together with other votes, not separately. Such a thing is in contradiction to the full confidentiality of the votes.

The elections in the municipality of Prishtina

In Prishtina the elections began with a considerable delay, in certain places they were more than one hour late. More than 260 observers from the CDHRF, the Centre for the Protection of Women and Children, Kosova Helsinki Committee, Norma and the Red Cross of Kosova, went to the polling stations at 6.30 a.m. 11 mobile teams were established as well.

In more than 170 voting stations in the municipality of Prishtina thousands of citizens rushed to cast their vote since the early hours of the morning. Yet, many voting stations did not open on time due to organizational problems. At 8.30 a.m., there were already large crowds of people queuing in front of the polling stations. Many were expressing their anger due to the poor organization of the elections and the irresponsibility of the organizers.

The whole process was accompanied by the negligence of the organizers and other officials responsible for the elections. There were cases when hundreds of people were queuing in front of one polling station. At the very same time there were no people in front of the other polling station (polling centres 1913 and 1914). The process was also hindered by the negligence of the voting committees. According to the CDHRF observers, the officials at the polling stations were totally unprepared. The blame for this falls on the organizers who have not done enough for the training of the members of the voting committees. Due to this, a number of irregularities were noticed: members of the voting committees assisted the citizens in voting and unauthorized people were noticed

inside the polling stations (once they had cast their vote the voters spent time in the polling stations). Other irregularities consisted in the fact that one person was allowed to assist more than one voter. There were many cases when the votes of the elderly people or the illiterate were manipulated.

At the 1912 polling centre the hands of the voters were scanned at the entrance to the polling centre.

Several cases were reported when the representatives of the media were not allowed to go inside the polling centres. No journalists were allowed inside the 1911 polling centre (Ismail Qemali Primary School) until 9.10 a.m. UNMIK police and members of the KPS behaved brutally towards the journalists who tried to get inside this polling centre. A police officer threatened to seize the camera of a journalist who was trying to take a photo of some 2000 people waiting in the queue. Our observer reminded the policemen that the representatives of the media should be allowed inside. Yet, the policemen told him that their orders were such. Our observer went to the international supervisor and told him that such an act was in opposition to the election regulation. On the intervention of the latter the representatives of the media were allowed inside the polling centre.

The organizational problems resulted in long queues. Therefore, there were still hundreds of people queuing in front of the polling centres after 7 p.m. In a number of polling centres the voting continued after 7 p.m. Nonetheless, there was a relatively large number of people who were not able to vote. In some places the citizens were persistent to vote even after 8 p.m. Yet, they were not allowed to do so.

At the 1926 polling centre one member of the voting committee was

wearing a T-shirt with an LDK emblem. The observer reported this to the international supervisor who made the official take off the emblem. The queue controller at this polling station was seen telling people not to vote for the AAK or PDK but for the LDK.

At about 7 p.m. there were numerous irregularities at the 1903/01 polling station. The situation was chaotic. It was impossible to distinguish between the members of the voting committee, the observers and the voters. The observer of the LDK wandered around the polling station, whereas the one of the PDK made loud comments. Many people were allowed into the polling station creating confusion inside it. During the day, several cases were reported when more than one person went behind the voting booth.

A number of cases were reported when the observers of the political parties spoke to the voters despite the fact that such a thing is prohibited. In most of the cases the irregularities were of a technical nature or had to do with the poor training of the voting officials.

According to our observers, the preliminary results of the voting in the municipality of Prishtina are LDK 67%, PDK 19%, AAK 4%, etc. CDHRF observers were also present at 2 polling stations in the clinics of the Prishtina Hospital. No irregularities were noticed at these polling stations.

The elections in the municipality of Zubin Potok

There was only one polling station in the municipality of Zubin Potok (the one in the village of Qabra - 2809). The voting began at 7 a.m. and ended at 7 p.m. Out of 429 people

who were entitled to vote, 262 voted. All the votes went for the LDK as it was the only party running in this municipality. There were no major irregularities during the elections. It is worth mentioning that the observers of PDK and AAK monitored the elections.

In the municipality of Leposaviq, the villagers of Ceraja, Bistrica and Koshtova e Vlahisë could not vote as there were no polling centres in this municipality.

The very same happened in the municipality of Zveçan. The villagers of Boletin, Zhazha and Kelmend could not vote as there were no polling centres in this municipality.

The elections in the municipality of Dragash

In the municipality of Dragash the elections began with a delay of more than one hour. This delay was due to the fact that the voting materials were not ready. No incidents were reported. Yet, there were a number of small irregularities, which occurred due to the poor training of the members of the voting committees. There were also cases when one person assisted more than one voter. The counting of votes was regular. Nonetheless, the poor training of the members of the voting committees and the international supervisors was more than evident.

LDK - 5928 voters	44%
AAK - 202	1.5%
PDK - 3936	29%
FQPK - 192	1.4%
SDA - 1500	11%
PBDK - 142	1.5%
GIG - 1599	11.8%

The elections in the municipality of Lipjan

Most of the polling centres in the municipality of Lipjan were opened at 7 a.m. Since the early hours of the morning there were long queues of people waiting to cast their votes. The queues were a result of the negligence of the organizers and of problems in finding the names of the voters in the final list of voters or in the additional lists.

The fact that a large number of people were not listed in the final list of voters, despite the fact that they had registered, created chaos in the polling centres, as people were wandering for hours from one polling station to the other.

No major irregularities which could affect the results of the voting process were reported. A large number of people could not vote despite the fact that a number of polling stations continued their work after 7 p.m. A large number of people could not vote in the villages of Shala, Babush and Lipjan.

Several cases were reported when the votes of illiterate people were manipulated. These people were assisted by members of the voting committee, who were members of the LDK.

82% of the people entitled to vote used this right of theirs. If there had not been such a large number of organizational problems the number of voters would have probably been higher. The preliminary results of the voting are:

LDK 49.9%
AAK 8.30%
PDK 41.80%

The elections in the municipality of Artana

In the municipality of Artana the elections began after 7 a.m. The elections were held in 2 polling centres: in Artana and Llabjan. There were many organizational problems during the voting process.

761 citizens voted. Three parties were running in the elections in this municipality: AAK, PDK and LDK.

Apart from a number of irregularities, which were mainly of a technical nature, there were no major problems.

The preliminary results of the elections in this municipality are:

LDK - 318 votes 42%
PDK - 380 49%
AAK - 63 6.3%

No incidents were reported during the voting process.

The elections in the municipality of Peja

In many polling centers in the municipality of Peja, the voting did not start on time. This resulted in large crowds of people queuing in front of the polling stations. A number of technical problems which mainly had to do with the identification of the voters as well as the incomplete final list of voters were some of the problems reported. There were also a number of irregularities, which resulted due to the poor training of the voting committees. These committees were negligent in their work. There were many cases when two or more voters stood inside one voting booth. In general, there were no major irregularities during the voting

process. The preliminary results of the voting are as follows:

LDK - 61%

AAK - 17%

PDK - 11%

The elections in the municipality of Rahovec:

The queues of the voters in Rahovec were very long. The voting started with delay due to organizational problems. There was non-coordination between officials in polling stations, therefore citizens were forced to wait for hours. Yet, there were no major irregularities that would influence the voters. The voters faced with technical difficulties.

There were 14 polling centres with 83 polling stations. Out of the total number of 49000 voters, about 35000 voters (72%) were able to vote despite the fact that the voting lasted until after 7 pm.

The CDHRF observers monitored the whole election process from the beginning of the voting until the vote counting ended. They claim that there were no incidents. The citizens voted with dignity and showed high political maturity.

According to the vote counting, the LDK won 60% of the votes.

The elections in the municipality of Burim (Istog):

In the municipality of Istog, the voting started with delay due to the lack of needed material for voting. CDHRF sent its observers at 6.30 am to all polling stations. The observers monitored the voting procedure until the end of vote counting.

In this municipality, out of the total number of 21300 voters, about 17000 (80%) voted, whereas the others were not able to vote due to the fact that the identification procedure was very slow. There were no major irregularities that would influence the final results of the elections. Yet, the members of the voting committees violated the voting regulation, especially when people with special needs were concerned. Moreover, they were not trained enough and it resulted in great problems.

The elections in the municipality of Deçan:

The citizens in Deçan showed great interest in voting. Many of them waited in queues before 7 am in order to vote. They faced many technical difficulties, as their names could not be found in the final list of voters and they were persistent in enjoying their right to vote. 21081 persons voted, whereas a considerable number of them were not able to vote, despite the fact that in some polling stations, voting lasted until midnight. Our observers did not notice any major irregularity, except for certain cases, which had to do with people who needed assistance during voting. There were cases when the accompanying persons did not sign their names next to those of the voters. According to the preliminary results, the LDK won 65%, AAK won 18%, PDK won 10% of the votes.

The election process itself was satisfactory and the citizens showed patience and tolerance despite the fact that they were forced to wait for hours to vote.

The elections in the municipality of Obiliq:

According to the CDHRF observers, the voting started with delay due to the lack of the voting material. The citizens were very interested in voting. Since 7 am, hundreds of citizens were waiting in queues in order to vote. Our observers did not notice any major incident or irregularity, except for the cases, which were evident in almost all polling stations in Kosova. The citizens faced technical difficulties, especially with the final list of voters. Our observers monitored the voting process in the camp of the Hashkali refugees in Plemetin, where a considerable number of Hashkalis voted.

6244 voters voted. Yet, many citizens were not able to vote despite their persistence.

According to the preliminary results, the situation is as follows:

LDK - 3589 votes or 57.4%
AAK - 1136 votes or 18.1%
PDK - 1377 votes or 22.15%

The elections in the municipality of Fushë-Kosova:

In Fushë Kosova, the voting started with delay due to the lack of the voting material. This caused long queues of people that waited for hours in order to vote. Our observers did not notice any irregularity that would influence the citizens. The technical difficulties made impossible for many citizens to vote. The voting lasted until after 7 pm. Despite this, a large number of people was not able to vote.

According to our observers, the LDK won 62% of the votes.

The elections in the municipality of Shtime:

All our observers were in their polling stations before 7 am. The citizens faced many technical difficulties, therefore they were forced to wait for hours in order to vote. Our observers did not notice any major irregularity that would influence the citizens. The members of the committees in the polling stations violated the election regulation. There were no incidents and the election process was peaceful. A large number of people were not able to vote due to the long hours of waiting and the negligence of the members of the committees.

According to our observers, the PDK won over 50%, the LDK won 44%, etc.

The elections in the municipality of Shtërpca:

In most of the polling centres in the municipality of Shtërpca, the polling stations were open on time. CDHRF had 20 observers in this municipality. There were no irregularities during the voting process. No incidents of any kind were reported. In the village of Firaja, there was a polling centre with 3 polling stations. There were many technical problems in this centre, especially with the final list of voters, which appeared to be incomplete. Consequently, many voters had to wander from one polling station to the other.

CONCLUSION:

As a conclusion of this preliminary report, CDHRF issues as follows:

-the organizer of the elections is responsible for the irregularities

regarding coordination and sub-coordination;

-the organizer of the elections is responsible for not training the local staff that was hired for the election day (in a polling station in "Gjergj Fishta" school, the training was held at 7 am, at the time when the voting was supposed to start);

-in many polling stations, the international staff was not trained and they read the election regulation for the first time during the voting;

-the organizer made mistakes regarding the number of polling stations.

The following contributed to the regularity and success of the elections:

-the large participation of the electorate in local elections (the CDHRF observers in 15 municipalities report that 80% of the voters voted);

-the discipline and good behaviour of the voters;

-the engagement of the observers of the Kosovar NGOs and those of the political parties, as well as international ones.

Based on the reports of its observers, Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms concludes that during the voting there were slight irregularities that could not influence the final results of the elections:

-voters were not forced or threatened to vote for a particular party;

-there was no possibility for manipulation with votes or boxes;

-the NGO observers were not hindered in their work and in many cases they were consulted.

Therefore, CDHRF thinks that the results of the elections should be accepted by every participant in the local elections, such as: political parties, alliances of political parties, civic initiatives, independent candidates, etc. The regularity of these elections is in accordance to international standards.

CDHRF greets the citizens of Kosova for their high political maturity and tolerance shown during the pre-electoral campaign and the election day in particular.

During the next few days, CDHRF will publish a detailed report on the elections in Kosova, which were held on 28 October 2000.

Prishtina, 29 October 2000
CDHRF - Prishtina