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The European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) is in Kazakhstan to observe the presidential election under the auspices of the National Democratic Institute's election-related activities.

ENEMO has concluded that the election of the president of Kazakhstan was not in conformity with a number of international standards for free and fair elections.

PRESS-RELEASE

“Violations during the pre-election period and on Election Day, as well as problems with accreditation of international observation missions, and journalists, make it impossible to conclude that the election process in the Republic of Kazakhstan was open and transparent,” said Sergey Tkachenko, Head of ENEMO division, during a press-conference on December 5th.

Although observers noted a generally high level of organization, Election Day was nevertheless marred by the following violations. Observers saw numerous instances of pressure on students and clear attempts to control their choices (for example polling stations #186 in Almaty (Kazakh State University), #110 of Shimkent). In more than 15 polling stations voting boxes were not sealed: ## 54, 534 in Akmolinskaya oblast, ## 108, 361, 368, 273, 281, 346, 282, 295 of Almaty, ## 49, 5, 45, 55 of Kostanai, #593 in Shimkent, #15 in Aktau. In a large number of polling stations voters' lists were not marked to indicate that voters requested the mobile ballot box. (#190 in Kokshetau, ##108, 361 in Almaty, ## 49, 150, 153, 572 in Kostanai). There were cases of campaigning on Election Day and violations in issuing absentee ballots. Observation of voting and counting of ballots was conducted in more than 310 polling stations by 30 short term ENEMO observers under the auspices of the National Democratic Institute's election-related programs.

The main problems in the pre-election period were: limitations on the rights and freedoms of voters; interference by the General Prosecutor, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the immigration police and other governmental institutions in the election process; and the unequal treatment of presidential candidates in Kazakhstan's press. Ten long-term ENEMO observers monitored the pre-election campaign period from November 19 to December 3, 2005, in six oblasts of the Republic of Kazakhstan: (*Mangistau oblast (Aktau), South Kazakhstan oblast (Shimkent, Taraz), North Kazakhstan oblast (Petropavlovsk), Kostanai oblast (Kostanai), Akmolinsk oblast (Astana), Almaty oblast (Almaty).*

ENEMO is still waiting for information on the quality of vote counting. ENEMO will distribute a final report and recommendations on improvement of the electoral process to the media, government agencies, the Central Electoral Commission, political parties and public organizations, missions of international organizations and embassies. ENEMO experts stated that all legal standards and election laws should be brought in line with international standards; particularly with those of the “1990 Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the OSCE”, which met from June 5 – 29 1990.

ENEMO is a network of 18 nongovernmental organizations from 16 countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, which have conducted large-scale observation missions in their own countries for many years. In general, the organizations participating in ENEMO have observed more than 140 election campaigns at the national level, have taken part in more than 40 international missions, and have trained more than 100,000 observers. In monitoring, ENEMO follows the principle of advancing democratic processes through unbiased observation of the organization and implementation of electoral campaigns, and compliance of the electoral process with relevant national legislation and international standards for democratic elections. On October 27, 2005, ENEMO, together with 20 other leading intergovernmental and international organizations endorsed a set of Principles for International Election Observation, in New York at the United Nations. Other signatories included the OSCE, European Commission, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the UN Election Assistance Mission and NDI.