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NDI Poll: Georgians Assess Government Performance as Poor; Hold Government Responsible for Violence in June and Believe it used “Excessive Force” on Protestors

TBILISI – Poll results released today by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and CRRG-Georgia show that 60 percent of Georgians evaluate the current government’s performance as “bad.” The poll also shows increasing negative assessments of the prime minister, president, courts, and parliament. Of the main public institutions, the Georgian Church and public service halls continue to enjoy the most favorable evaluations, with 64 percent and 57 percent positive assessment, respectively. Mayor of Tbilisi Kakha Kaladze continues to have a net positive assessment.

“There has been a decline in the perceived performance of the government over the past year, likely linked to citizens’ poor evaluation of the country’s direction and economy,” said Laura Thornton, NDI senior director. “As our poll presentations on Tuesday showed, Georgians hold the government responsible for their economic well-being.”

The vast majority of Georgians (92 percent) are aware of the demonstrations on June 20, and, in an open-ended question, 55 percent place responsibility for the violence that occurred on government agencies, including the government (43 percent), then-Interior Minister Gakharia (nine percent), and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and police (one percent each). Eight percent of citizens blame UNM for violence on June 20.

Of those who were aware of the demonstrations, 68 percent also believe the government used “excessive force” to disperse protestors. Of those, 71 percent do not believe adequate action was taken to hold those responsible. However, the public is mixed about demands for Gakharia’s resignation, with 46 percent of those who were aware of June 20th events agreeing he should, and 39 percent disagreeing.

“The Georgian public is not satisfied with the handling of events on June 20, and hold the government largely responsible,” said Thornton. “It is essential that the government take swift action to hold those who committed acts of violence against protestors accountable, and to build the trust of citizens in the government’s ability to peacefully manage protests in the future.”

Most Georgians cannot identify a party that is closest to them, with only 19 percent choosing ruling party Georgian Dream, nine percent opposition United National Movement, and four percent each for European Georgia-Free Democrats and Alliance of Patriots. While 59 percent of respondents said they would vote if elections were held tomorrow, 57 percent are politically undecided.

NDI surveys public opinion to help Georgian stakeholders diagnose and address issues of public concern by providing accurate, unbiased and statistically-sound data. This poll aims to capture the most relevant information to foster the development of responsive policies and governance. A wide range of leaders from across the political spectrum have reported that the polls are important to their work and encourage continued polling. The results reflect data collected from July 13-29, 2019, through face-to-face interviews with a nationwide representative sample of Georgia's adult population, excluding occupied territories, that included 2,131 completed interviews. The average margin of error is +/- 1.7 percent.

NDI's survey work is funded by UK aid from the British people.

This poll was carried out by CRRC Georgia.

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NDI is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. More information is available at www.ndi.org.

CRRC-Georgia is a non-governmental, non-profit research organization with a mission to promote evidence based debates on policy issues by providing reliable, up-to-date and accessible data and analysis. More information is available at <http://www.crrc.ge>