



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May13

Contact: Diana Chachua, Tbilisi, dchachua@ndi.org, +995577 779639
Kathy Gest, Washington, kgest@ndi.org, 202-728-5535

NDI POLL: MOST GEORGIANS UNDECIDED ABOUT THEIR POLITICAL OPTIONS; OPTIMISM ABOUT ECONOMY AND DIRECTION OF COUNTRY STRONGER AMONG RULING PARTY-SUPPORTERS

TBILISI – The poll released today by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and its partner CRRC Georgia shows that most Georgians do not have a preferred political party or do not know which party they support. Only 21 percent identified Georgian Dream as the party closest to them, and 13 percent identified United National Movement (UNM).

NDI surveys public opinion to help Georgian stakeholders diagnose and address issues of public concern by providing accurate, unbiased, and statistically sound data.

"The electoral playing field is wide open and no party is strongly ahead in Georgia," said Laura Thornton, NDI's senior director in Georgia. "Georgians are undecided about their political support, presenting an opportunity for all parties to spend the next year and a half leading up to the parliamentary elections earning citizens' backing through responsive platforms and policies."

Party-affiliation shapes the way Georgians view their household and the country, with Georgian Dream supporters far more likely than other respondents to perceive the government as making changes that matter to them (76 percent Georgian Dream party supporters versus 44 percent national average), their households as better off (27 percent Georgian Dream party supporters versus 11 percent national average), and the country moving in the right direction (52 percent Georgian Dream party supporters versus 23 percent national average). However, Georgian Dream party and opposition supporters are equally likely to identify Russia as a "negative influence."

Overall, citizens consider the ministries to be performing well, with the Ministry for Labor, Healthcare, and Social Affairs perceived as performing best (43 percent). The Ministry of Finance is perceived as having the poorest performance (6 percent). Parliament too has a low approval rating, with only 10 percent judging its work favorably. The Georgian police's performance has also dropped significantly down to 33 percent from more than 60 percent in 2010.

Public figures with the highest approval ratings are the Patriarch Ilia II (87 percent), President Giorgi Margvelashvili (52 percent), and opposition Free Democrat leader Irakli Alasania (51 percent). With regard to other prominent figures, the majority of Georgians believed that former Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili should either return to politics in an official capacity (30 percent) or not be involved in decision-making at all (41 percent). Only 6 percent believed he should make decisions in an unofficial capacity.

The poll was developed in consultation with party, government, and civil society leaders and 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 March 27-April 19 through face-to-face interviews with a nationwide representative sample of citizens of Georgia that included 4,360 completed interviews. The average margin of error is +/- 2.3 percent. NDI's survey work is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

-END-

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>