



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NDI POLL: LOW TRUST IN PARLIAMENT AND POLITICAL FIGURES; MOST GEORGIANS POLITICALLY UNDECIDED

TBILISI – Poll results released today by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and CRRC Georgia reveal dissatisfaction in the country’s political institutions, with Georgians believing their representatives are inaccessible and fail to address issues that matter to them.

Georgians do not believe MPs consider citizens’ opinions or take action to solve their problems. The majority (64 percent) believes their MP only represents his or her own interests, while only 24 percent of Georgians describe MPs as representing them. Almost no one (2 percent) has been contacted by an MP or his or her staff since the 2012 elections, and fewer than one-third (31 percent) can correctly name their majoritarian representative, further indicating the disconnect between citizens and their elected representatives. Moreover, most citizens (70 percent) do not know how to reach their MP, and only 9 percent believe it to be easy to physically access the parliament building. Only 37 percent of citizens feel parliament passes legislation on issues that matter to them; while 48 percent disagree.

“According to Georgians, parliament is falling short on its main responsibility – to represent the needs and interests of citizens. Its members, and even the building itself, are seen as inaccessible to the public,” said NDI Senior Director Laura Thornton. “It is critical that parliament pursue institutional reforms and build a culture that encourages greater constituent outreach, accountability, and accessibility, which will lead to more responsive legislation and policy-making to ensure that democracy in Georgia is delivering.”

With regard to the executive branch, no single ministry received a positive assessment by the majority of Georgians. Citizens evaluate the Ministry of Labor, Healthcare, and Social Affairs the most favorably, followed by the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of European and Euro-Atlantic Integration. Recently-appointed Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili received the highest net-positive evaluation of key leaders, with 27 percent assessing his performance as good, 42 percent as average, and only 6 percent as poor.

The majority of Georgians (61 percent) remain undecided about their political alignment, including half of likely voters. When asked “which party is closest to you,” 16 percent of respondents choose Georgian Dream, 15 percent UNM, 9 percent Free Democrats, 5 percent Labor Party, and 5 percent Alliance of Patriots of Georgia. If elections were held tomorrow, 15 percent say they would vote for the Georgian Dream Coalition, 13 percent for UNM, 6 percent for Free Democrats, 4 percent for Labor Party, and 3 percent for Alliance of Patriots.

“As shown in our polls over the past year, the electoral playing field is still wide open and no party is ahead in Georgia,” said Thornton. “Georgians are dissatisfied with and disappointed in the country’s political leaders, saying they do not represent them and are not accessible to them. It is not, therefore, surprising that citizens are completely undecided about their political support. Related, Georgians want to see more women in politics. According to this

poll, Georgians believe that at least 30 percent of parliamentary seats should be held by women, and more than half support mandatory gender quotas in parliament. Parties and politicians have a lot of work to do over the months ahead of the elections to rebrand, rebuild trust, and talk to voters about issues that really matter to them.”

NDI surveys public opinion to help Georgian stakeholders diagnose and address issues of public concern by providing accurate, unbiased and statistically-sound data. 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 from February 23 to March 14 through face-to-face interviews with a nationwide representative sample of citizens of Georgia that included 3,900 completed interviews. The average margin of error is +/- 1,6 percent.

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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>