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NDI POLL: GEORGIANS UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT COUNTRY'S LEADERS, INSTITUTIONS, AND POLITICAL PARTIES THOUGH HALF BELIEVE THE COUNTRY IS GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

TBILISI – Poll results released today by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and CRRC Georgia show that although Georgians are split in their assessment of the country's direction, they are unified in believing that the country is a better place than 15 years ago. People are also optimistic about the more distant future, with 69 percent believing the next generation will be better off.

Georgians are also evenly divided between those who believe the government is making changes that matter to them (50 percent) and those who disagree (48 percent). Overall, Georgians evaluate the performance of the country's leaders and ministries as average, with low positive ratings. The President's and Prime Minister's assessment is most favorable, with almost identical ratings at 27 percent positive and 50 percent average rating for the president, and a 25 percent positive, 53 percent average for the Prime Minister. The Speaker of Parliament has a positive evaluation from 15 percent of respondents and average assessment of 42 percent. The Tbilisi Mayor has the highest poor performance ranking, with 52 percent assessing his office badly and only 8 percent positively. Healthcare, Justice, and Defense ministries receive the highest net positive performance assessments, while Agriculture, Economy, and Finance are evaluated negatively. With regard to institutions, the church, public service halls, and the army are assessed most favorably, while the courts, Tbilisi sakrebulo, and parliament perform poorly.

Party support remains low in Georgia, with 42 percent reporting that no party is closest to them or they don't know. The Georgian Dream party receives 29 percent support, down from 40 percent in November, followed by UNM with 10 percent. Alliance of Patriots and Labor party have 4 percent and 3 percent respectively, and no other party was outside the margin of error.

"We see a lack of enthusiasm about the performance of government and political parties, with Georgians largely unimpressed and unaligned," - stated NDI Senior Director Laura Thornton. - "It is concerning in particular that the issues of greatest importance to Georgians -- economy, finance, and agriculture -- are also the ministries with the poorest performance perception."

On the proposed constitutional amendments, most citizens (84 percent) believe they should directly elect the president, rather than have elected officials do so, including those who support the Georgian Dream party. A plurality would also like to directly elect their majoritarian MPs (47 percent), while 28 percent

favor dropping the majoritarian system. In current affairs, the vast majority of Georgians (79 percent) is aware of the Rustavi 2 Supreme Court ruling giving ownership to Kibar Khalvashi. The majority of these people (56 percent) believes there was government interference into the case, and only 28 percent assess the trial as fair.

“While discussions on the proposed constitutional measures continue, it is valuable to learn that Georgians want to be able to choose their representatives themselves, rather than rely on intermediaries to decide for them,” - states Thornton, adding, - “Those who insist on the adoption of indirect elections will have to make a strong case as to why and how this directly benefits Georgian citizens.”

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 April 7 to April 28 through face-to-face interviews with a nationwide representative sample of Georgia’s adult population, excluding occupied territories, that included 2,493 completed interviews. The average margin of error is +/- 2,7 percent.

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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>