



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact**

**NDI In Tbilisi:** Gvantsa Nadiradze  
gnadiradze@ndi.org, +995 593 788 330

**IRI In Tbilisi:** Ana Mikadze  
amikadze@iri.org, +995 574 808 806

**NDI In Washington, D.C.:** Clayton McCleskey  
media@ndi.org

**IRI In Washington, D.C.:** Austin Akers  
media@iri.org

**NDI AND IRI EXPERT TEAMS ENCOURAGE GEORGIAN POLITICAL PARTIES TO ENGAGE IN GOOD FAITH AROUND THE OCTOBER 2 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AND IN THE RESULTING POLITICAL PROCESS**

**WASHINGTON** – Expert teams from the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) are visiting Tbilisi immediately ahead of the October 2, 2021, municipal elections and are calling on all political parties to uphold democratic principles by participating actively and in good faith during the elections and in the post-election period. If the parties genuinely commit themselves to constructive competition and dialogue rooted in citizen interests, Georgia can maintain its legitimate place among the region's democracies.

The NDI and IRI expert teams will meet with governmental and political leaders from all sides to express support for electoral and political engagement based on democratic principles. The teams will also meet with citizen election observers in recognition of the critical role they play in safeguarding electoral integrity. In addition, the teams will engage with international election observers and the diplomatic community to gain perspectives on how the election period might impact perceptions of Georgia's path ahead.

The two Institutes' expert teams will not issue statements before or after the elections. However, they will be informed by their respective teams of long-term analysts who, in parallel to the expert teams, are assessing the electoral process, including the conduct of party campaigns, electoral administration, and the complaints and adjudication process through election day. IRI and NDI plan to publish reports of their electoral assessments several weeks after the elections. NDI and IRI express their appreciation to the U.S. Agency for International Development

for funding this and the Institutes' other independent electoral-related activities in conjunction with the Consortium for Elections and Political Processes (CEPPS).

*Members of the expert team include Scott Mastic, IRI Vice President for Programs; Stephen Nix, IRI Regional Director for Eurasia, Nicole Rowsell, NDI Acting Vice President; Lauren van Metre, NDI Senior Advisor for Peace and Security; Pat Merloe, NDI Senior Associate and Director of Elections Programs; Alan Gillam, NDI Resident Director for Georgia; and John DiPirro, IRI Resident Director for Georgia.*

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*The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental organization that works in partnership around the world to strengthen and safeguard democratic institutions, processes, norms and values to secure a better quality of life for all. NDI envisions a world where democracy and freedom prevail, with dignity for all. More information is available at [www.ndi.org](http://www.ndi.org).*

*A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, the International Republican Institute (IRI) advances freedom and democracy worldwide by helping political parties to become more responsive, strengthening transparent and accountable governance, and working to increase the role of marginalized groups in the political process – including women and youth. More information is available at [www.iri.org](http://www.iri.org).*