

ARMENIA

Election observation
Parliamentary Elections, June 7 2026

PRELIMINARY REPORT



SUMMARY

Summarizing our observations observers viewed the environment around the Polling stations as being satisfactory, with only a few exceptions. The process was smooth and the procedures and standards were generally followed, some procedural mistakes due to confusion (queues and crowds) or unfamiliarity of voters. The Polling Station Officials (PSO)s seem to be mostly professional and confident with the procedures, despite exceptional cases, where they did not react promptly to irregularities, and showed hostility towards observers. A general remark is instances of proxies (party representatives) interfering with the electoral process. Furthermore, we regret that the Central Electoral Committee did not grant accreditation for several international CSOs, which obliged us and similar smaller organisations to undergo local accreditation through relevant Armenian partners.

Accreditation

Before delivering our preliminary findings, we would like to address the issue of our accreditation as international election observers and clarify the framework under which our observation mission was conducted.

The Armenian legal framework allows for both international and local election observation. On the 7th of June, the Danish and observers and coordinators were accredited as local observers through our Armenian partner, the youth-led and youth-oriented NGO Armenian Progressive Youth (APY). Along with other similar organizations such as European Dialogue and Democracy Association (EDDA) Silba/VU did not receive accreditation as international observers, and thus had to be accredited through local organizations. The official reasoning received by the Armenian MFA was that none of the organizations applied for accreditation within reasonable time of the deadline. This is, however, disputed by both Silba and VU. Furthermore, the official communication from the MFA must also be considered lackluster, since VU never received an official rejection, and Silba only received it four days before the election. This change in observer status had no implications for the observers, since the rights of international and local observers are the same. Also, this non-international status was reflected in the Silba methodology and training of observers.

INTRODUCTION

Methodology

Being deployed as STO's (Short-term observers) the observers focused on procedural and other irregularities occurring during the election day itself, and therefore not actions prior to the election day. Not finding evidence of foreign interference during this process does not rule out the possibility of it. Therefore, our methodology does not rule out foreign interference, but at the same time, that is not what our methodology looks at.

As mentioned, all observers were trained to the same high standard of non-partisan and non-interference election observation, as per Silba standards. The aim of this approach is to support democratic institutions and free and fair elections. Our observers undergo extensive training, including Silba's training program and a requirement to complete the OSCE/ODIHR observer courses for both long-term and short-term monitoring, a training seminar course before the election, as well as our training leading up to election day. This comprehensive preparation ensures that our teams are well equipped to perform their duties with the highest level of professionalism. Furthermore, the election observation was conducted using the app Votemonitor, which is part of the Infrastructure for Good developed by Code for Romania.

Deployment

Silba/VU/APY deployed 75 observers, where 19 of the STOs reside in Denmark, and 56 of the STOs were Armenian nationals. The teams were strategically deployed across various regions of Armenia: Yerevan, Ararat, Armavir, Aragatsotn, Kotayk, Gegharkunik, Lori, Shirak, Tavush, Vayot Dzor and Syunik. This targeted approach allowed us to maximize our coverage and ensure a diverse assessment of electoral conditions in different regions within Armenia. Each of the municipalities holds particular significance in the political and cultural landscape of the country and thus helps us understand the electoral dynamics within the different regions.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Opening procedure

The opening was assessed positively in all polling stations observed and was described by observers as generally calm, smooth and professional. Polling stations opened on time, with some having minor delays. The PS had the required election materials and opening procedures were generally followed, with only minor irregularities.

Some observers reported that they did not have an unimpeded view of the opening procedure, and there were instances of police presence at the polling stations, as well as the presence of unauthorized persons. In one instance, the observers did not have access to seeing the zero-reference form. In another, a proxy sealed the ballot box instead of the chairperson.

Proxies

The misconduct found is especially related to proxies representing political parties. These included interfering with the process, i.e. directing voters; getting confrontational with PSOs; standing too close to the voting booths and ballot box; assisting voters in procedure (thereby taking on the role of PSOs); approaching and attempting to influence voters; making allegations against proxies from other parties; interfering in the counting procedure; and in few instances not wearing accreditation badges. Some tensions were recorded between the proxies and PSOs, including an episode of altercation between a local observer, a proxy and a PSO. In two instances in rural areas, proxies were campaigning inside the polling station. Furthermore, there have been instances where the number of proxies from the same party exceeded two, the allowed number. Lastly, there were indications of campaign activity outside polling stations, mostly led by proxies.

Unauthorized people

In at least one instance, non-invited police were present in the polling station. Furthermore, there were instances of police presence during the counting procedure. There were few instances of unidentifiable people, approaching voters and proxies, both inside and around the polling stations.

Voting procedures

Secrecy of the vote

Polling booths were mostly positioned so they ensured the secrecy of the vote. Yet, in some instances, the secrecy of the vote was at risk, i.e. when booths were positioned in front of unblinded windows (or obscured by improvised materials such as papers or paintings); in front of doors; or with a large distance to the wall.

Group voting

There were some instances of group voting, including both non-families and families (mostly older couples). In a few of these instances, the PSOs did not intervene and in one instance the PSO argued that married couples had the right to vote together. In a few cases, voters were accompanied despite no apparent need for assistance.

Few instances of larger irregularities

In one case, the ballot did not have the proper red seal and was rather sealed with only adhesive tape. When enquired about, this was corrected and noted as an incident report in the Polling Station's journal. In another instance, a voter was caught taking a picture of the ballot. The police then came and made the voter delete the picture.

Layout of polling station and voting equipment

The layout of the polling stations was overall satisfying, and the voter turnout was positively high. Yet, because of a few cases of small polling stations, crowds and queues were possibly affecting the process. In a few instances, voting booths were not in suitable conditions. In a few instances, voting materials were lacking, such as envelopes and paper slips for certain parties. Furthermore, a high number of polling stations were lacking accessible entrance for people with disabilities. Braille was provided when needed.

Procedural mistakes

Voters were not always acquainted with the voting procedure, why some were enquiring about other voters and observing other voters' conduct over the ballot booths.

There have been few cases of procedural mistakes related to the voting lists. In one case a voter was, at first, denied voting as their signature seemed to have already been registered. This was, however, solved, and the voter was allowed to vote.

Observers' right of movement in polling stations

In some cases, observers were not allowed to move freely within the polling station, to look inside the voting booths (even when they were empty) or to consult the journal. In one instance, the polling station chairperson was aggressively addressing the observers during their duty, compelling them to leave the polling station.

Closing procedures

The Polling Stations generally closed on time. Although the counting was overall conducted in a consistent manner, there were instances of a lack of transparency during the counting process. This includes unclear procedure of counting unused self-adhesive stamps; missing counting of voter passes; and incorrect sealing of electoral material envelopes. Further, observers expressed concerns over the chain-of-custody related to the handling of sensitive electoral materials with cases of these being left seemingly unattended. In a few cases, there were multiple ballots in the voting envelopes, creating confusion among PSOs whether to invalidate them. There were some instances of police presence inside the polling station during counting and reconciliation procedures.

Several polling stations experienced tense discussions and procedural disagreements during the process. The most common source of conflict concerned inconsistencies between the number of signatures, voter passes, machine registrations, and ballots counted. In multiple cases PSO's, proxies, and observers engaged in longer arguments regarding missing or mismatched votes before counting could proceed.

As described under "proxies", there were multiple instances of proxies interfering with the counting procedure. This included touching ballots, moving ballot boxes, handling envelopes and assisting PSOs. Several polling stations experienced repeated recounts and demands for recounts initiated by proxies actively disputing ballot validity and reconciliation figures. In one incident, proxies removed ballots belonging to a specific party from the counting table and took it to another table to conduct a separate recount. In some polling stations, these interventions escalated into heated arguments, creating delays and confusion during the counting process.

Several observers reported difficulties in accessing, reviewing, or obtaining copies of the final protocols during the closing process. In a number of polling stations, observers had to insist repeatedly before being allowed to receive copies of the protocols, despite this being required by law. In other cases, copies were provided only after prolonged discussions or pressure from observers. There were also reports of incomplete documentation practices, including protocols lacking proper signatures, names, or stamps at the time they were distributed.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Silba, APY and VU would like to thank everyone involved, including fellow international observers and local volunteers. Special thanks are due to Commit Global for providing Vote Monitor, which enabled real-time data collection and reporting from polling stations. The findings and conclusions of Silba, APY and VU are fully independent.

For the June 7th Armenian parliamentary election all three organisations deployed observers as part of a larger project centered around furthering democratic understanding, democratic participation and cultural exchange between Armenian and Danish youth. Therefore, the three organizations co-organized the mission, with Silba being in charge of methodology and training.



Silba - Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy is a Danish non-partisan and nonprofit youth organization which aims to strengthen democratic dialogue, institutions and organizations. Silba organizes local and international activities, with a main focus on election observation missions, long term international projects and local engagement.



VU - Liberal Youth is a Danish youth political party who works purposefully with international cooperation to strengthen our liberal values globally and improve conditions for young people around the world. Through partnerships with organisations like LYMEC and IFLRY and DUF. We help shape the international political agenda.



Armenian Progressive Youth is a dynamic non-profit organization based in Armenia. Established in 2009 by a group of passionate young individuals, its mission is to foster youth engagement in decision-making processes and empower young people to develop their leadership skills.

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