



**Voting Numbers  
Electronic Monitoring  
of 2017 Parliamentary  
Elections in Armenia**

Yerevan - 2017

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Սույն զեկույցի թողարկումը հնարավոր է դարձել Բաց հասարակության հիմնադրամներ - Հայաստան կազմակերպության օժանդակության շնորհիվ, դրամաշնորհ N19492: Ձեկույցում տեղ գտած տեսակետները և վերլուծությունները արտահայտում են հեղինակների կարծիքը և կարող են չհամընկնել Բաց հասարակության հիմնադրամներ - Հայաստան կազմակերպության տեսակետների և դիրքորոշումների հետ:



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## INTRODUCTION

Similar to all previous monitoring projects, electronic monitoring of voting numbers at the April 2, 2017 parliamentary elections in Armenia was aimed at preventing possible fraud and violations and, by that, help to restore the trust of the society to the institute of elections. Its objectives were to control the accuracy of the process and results of voting in all precincts, analyze possible instances of irregularities and fraud during voting and assess the impact of fraud and irregularities on the outcome of the referendum. The project was funded by the Open Society Foundations - Armenia.

This method of electronic monitoring of voting numbers has been already applied by Transparency International Anti-Corruption Center (TIAC) during the 2012 National Assembly, 2013 presidential, 2013 Yerevan Council elections and 2015 constitutional referendum. The method, which is based on the comparison of certain, related to each other voting numbers<sup>1</sup>, is described in detail in the “Voting rights and electoral falsifications” (ISBN-978-9939-53-733-7) book (in Armenian), published in 2010 in Yerevan. The basic assumption, on which the concept of the method is based, is that if the electoral procedures have been conducted properly, then the mathematical relationships between those numbers shall have certain (“correct”) values or range of values. If the voting procedures have been carried out in a proper manner, then the mathematical relationships between the voting numbers should be equal certain values. If those values are different, then one could have serious and legitimate concerns that there could be serious risks on occurrence of irregularities and, even, fraud that took place in the electoral processes. The findings of the method could be very important additional proof for the findings revealed by the observation of the electoral processes before the Election Day, as well as on that day in the polling stations, including the vote counting and summarization of the results in the precincts.

Lyudvig Khachatryan, author of the method, is the head of the monitoring group in this project. The same group also carried out electronic monitoring at all mentioned above elections and constitutional referendum. The results of those monitoring efforts are currently available at TIAC website (see <http://elections.transparency.am/>).

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<sup>1</sup> All voting numbers are official numbers posted by the governmental bodies on their official websites. Those bodies are the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) of the Republic of Armenia, Police of the Republic of Armenia and National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia. Among those numbers are permanent population, number of voters, turnout, number of ballot papers in the ballot box, number of self-adhesive stamps, number of stubs, number of votes casted in favor of party, candidate (or during the referendum – number of “Yes” and “No” votes), duration of voting, etc. All these numbers are calculated for each precinct, settlement, electoral district, marz, as well as for the country, as a whole.

## MAIN FINDINGS

The results of the project are available at TIAC website

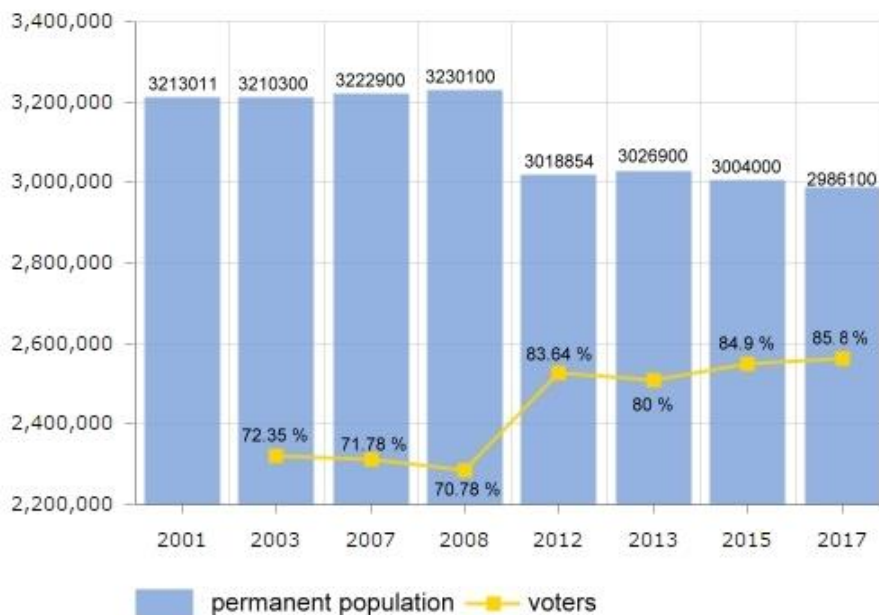
(see [http://elections.transparency.am/2017/index.php?am\\_population2001-2017,36](http://elections.transparency.am/2017/index.php?am_population2001-2017,36)).

Its main findings are:

### Voters lists

- At the eve of 2017 parliamentary elections the ratio of voters included in the voters lists to the permanent population in Armenia was equal to 85.8%, which was slightly more, than that before the December 2015 Constitutional Referendum (84.9%). With permanent population equal to 2,986,100 by January 1, 2017 (see <http://armstat.am/am/?nid=80&id=1916> on the web-site of the National Statistical Service of Armenia), the total number of voters by March 29, 2017 was 2,563,323, according to the voters lists, which were posted on the official web-site of the Police of the Republic of Armenia ([www.police.am](http://www.police.am)).<sup>2</sup> The dynamics of the change of the permanent population and the voters can be seen from Figure 1.

Figure 1.



<sup>2</sup> Currently, these lists are taken out from the mentioned web-site.

- Similar to previous elections and 2015 referendum, during these elections thousands of addresses were, in each of which too many voters are registered. In particular, there were 10,444 addresses, in each of which 10 or more voters were registered (see [http://elections.transparency.am/2017/index.php?am\\_electors-republic-address,44](http://elections.transparency.am/2017/index.php?am_electors-republic-address,44)). In total, there were 141,284 voters in those addresses. Hundred and more voters were registered in 12 addresses with 2,149 voters there.<sup>3</sup> The developed software enables also sorting such addresses by marzes, settlements, electoral districts and precincts. However, it is worth mentioning that the potential risk of multiple voting stemming from inflated voters lists, namely, voting instead of those voters included in the voters lists, who emigrated from the country is currently substantially offset. According to the Part 3.1 of Article 73 of the current Electoral Code, which entered into effect on June 1, 2016, the lists of voters including those who have voted shall be posted on the CEC web-site after the voting day.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it became possible to check, if there have been multiple voting instead of those, who were not in the country on the voting day. In the framework of another project of TIAC, which was monitoring the misuse of administrative resources, the monitors of that project were asked to also check in their cities randomly selected addresses with 10 or more voters, to find out, how many of those registered in those addresses did actually reside there.<sup>5</sup> After the voting day, when the voters' lists were posted on the CEC web-site, the author of this report checked these addresses to see, if there was voting instead of those, who emigrated from the country. The check showed that the monitors from 8 towns revealed in the addresses given to them 217 voters, who emigrated from the country and in the case of 16 of them votes were cast. Out of these 16 votes, 6 were cast in Vanadzor (out of 39), 6 from Kapan (out of 10), 2 from Goris (out of 22), 1 from Artashat (out of 18) and 1 from Ashtarak (out of 57). There were no such cases in Martuni, Armavir and Hrazdan.

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<sup>3</sup> Some of those addresses are addresses of elderly houses, dormitories or homes having the same address.

<sup>4</sup> The mentioned Part of the Article 73 provides that starting from noon of the day following the voting day the district electoral commissions shall start scanning the voters' lists, which obviously include the names of those voters, who voted on the voting day. Within 24 hours after completing the scanning process, the scanned lists shall be posted on the CEC web-site.

<sup>5</sup> The mentioned project on the misuse of administrative resources was implemented in 13 cities and towns of Armenia. These cities and cities and towns were Yerevan (the capital city), administrative centers of all 10 marzes (provinces) of Armenia (towns of Armavir, Artashat, Ashtarak, Gavar, Gyumri, Hrazdan, Idjevan, Kapan, Vanadzor and Yeghegnadzor), as well as towns of Goris and Martuni. The monitors from all these cities and towns, except Yerevan, were provided with lists of randomly selected addresses, where 10 or more voters were registered. The monitors from Yerevan didn't conduct this exercise.

- Search for unknown voters was triggered by the publications in media and statements from opposition arguing that on the voting day the authorities would widely use “fictitious” voters to secure the victory of the ruling political party. The monitors employed in the above mentioned project on the misuse of administrative resources were asked also to find out, if in the addresses given to them, there were voters, who were unknown either to the residents of those addresses or their neighbors. The monitors revealed 165 such voters in 7 towns.<sup>6</sup> Votes were cast for 66 such voters, among them 25 (out of 64) in Artashat, 7 (out of 16) in Ashtarak, 17 (out of 26) in Goris and 17 (out of 34) in Kapan. No votes were cast for unknown voters in Vanadzor (out of 12), Martuni (out of 5) and Hrazdan (out of 8). As it could be seen, the proportion of those instead of whom votes were cast among “unknown” voters is higher, than that for the category of emigrated voters (40% compared to 7-8%).
- Non-governmental media and opposition also were arguing that the authorities were using also “fictitious” (or non-existent) or old addresses, in which non-existent voters were registered. An indirect indication of existence of such addresses could be the number of addresses, which did not exist during the previous elections or referendum, and now there are such addresses. The underlying assumption was that it could be possible that part of the new addresses were “fictitious”, as well. Apparently, only political parties or long-term election observers could undertake such endeavor, namely, check all addresses containing the voters’ lists or “fictitious” voters, and in that case, the numbers revealed through this monitoring could help to prevent large-scale fraud during elections. The analysis of voting numbers revealed that in total **47, 165** addresses, which were in the voters’ lists of 2017 elections, were not existing during 2015 constitutional referendum (see [http://elections.transparency.am/2017/index.php?am\\_2017-2015-differences-voters-addresses,53](http://elections.transparency.am/2017/index.php?am_2017-2015-differences-voters-addresses,53) ). At the same time, it is interesting to mention that in its turn **43,003** addresses that existed during 2015 constitutional referendum did not exist in the voters’ lists of 2017 parliamentary elections. These numbers require more serious steps towards revealing to what extent this violation took place during elections.
- In the voters’ lists there were still voters, who either did not have addresses or their addresses do not contain information about the number of the apartment or home, in which they were registered. This time there were 2,755 such voters.

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<sup>6</sup> The monitors from the town of Armavir were revealing only those voters in the selected addresses, who emigrated from the country.

## Duration (speed) of voting

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The voting speed (duration) of voting is defined empirically either by timing the voting cycle or measuring the number of voters, who voted during a certain time interval (for example, 30 minutes).

Unlike previous elections, during these elections the voting process was video-recorded and it allowed measuring the voting speed, directly on the voting day, on April 2.<sup>7</sup> The measurements of the voting speed revealed that the maximal voting speed when there were queues was about 50 seconds,<sup>8</sup> meaning that durations smaller, than this duration is almost impossible. Thus, in the further processing of data on voters' turnout, this number was used. Considering the fact that, based on the requirement of the Electoral Code (see Part 9 of Article 8 of the Code), on April 2 the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) was posting on its web-site for all precincts the number of voters participating in the voting for every three hours (from 8:00 to 11:00, from 11:00 to 14:00, from 14:00 to 17:00 and from 17:00 to 20:00) starting from the opening of the voting at 8:00 and finishing at the closing of voting at 20:00, the numbers of voters who voted were taken for each mentioned above 3-hour time intervals.

Using the voting speed calculations, it is possible to reveal cases, when the turnout at a particular 3-hour time interval exceeded the officially defined capacity of the polling station. Under the officially defined capacity of the polling station it is taken the maximal number of voters, which shall be included, according to the Electoral Code, in one precinct. In the case of the current Armenian Electoral Code this number is equal to 2,000 (see Part 3 of Article 16 of the Code). This means that it is considered that the precinct electoral commission can handle no more, than 2,000 voters during the 12-hour period (from 8am to 8pm) period of voting. Based on this number, one can argue that the capacity of the polling station for a 3-hour period of voting is equal to 500. Considering the fact that the Electoral Code requires that the register of voters (where the voters sign to take the ballot papers) shall not exceed 1,000 voters (see Part 4 of Article 11 of the Code). This implies that there shall be 2 registers in those precincts, where there are more, than 1,000 voters, and one register in those precincts, where there are less, than 1,000 voters. This means that the physical capacity of the precincts with less or equal 1,000 voters for a 3-hour time interval could be considered as equal to 250 (1,000:4).

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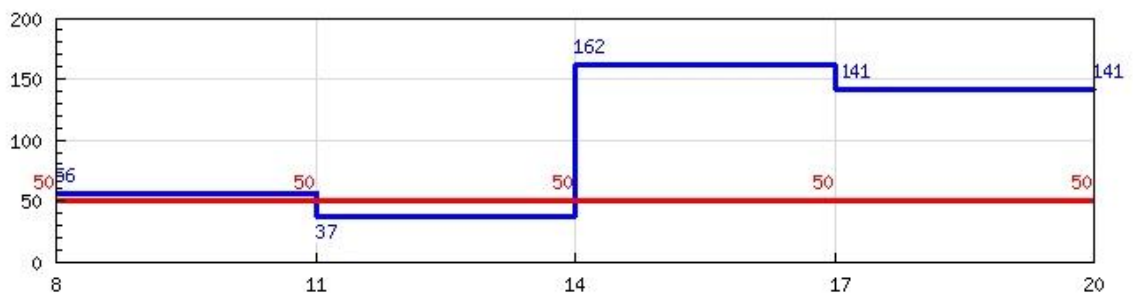
<sup>7</sup> During previous elections the voting speed was measured either by the members of the monitoring team or using the videos provided by local election observers from civil society organizations.

<sup>8</sup> The voting cycle is measured several times, when there are queues and the maximal voting speed is the shortest duration measured in several measurements.



- In 181 precincts (number of voters who voted in those precincts was equal to 182,478) the duration of voting (voting speed) at one or more 3-hour time intervals was smaller, than 50 seconds. Among them, in 22 precincts (20,791 voters participated) this duration did not exceed even 40 seconds. Such numbers could point to the high probability of ballot stuffing.<sup>9</sup>It is interesting to mention that in almost half of the precincts with high speed of voting (86 precincts) such voting took place during the time interval between 11:00 to 14:00. In 27 out of these 86 precincts high voting speeds were registered also during the time interval from 14:00 to 17:00, in 2 precincts also during the time interval between 8:00 to 11:00 and in 2 other precincts – also during the time interval from 17:00 to 20:00. An example of such visualized analysis is brought on Figures 2a, 2b and 2c for precinct 8/31.

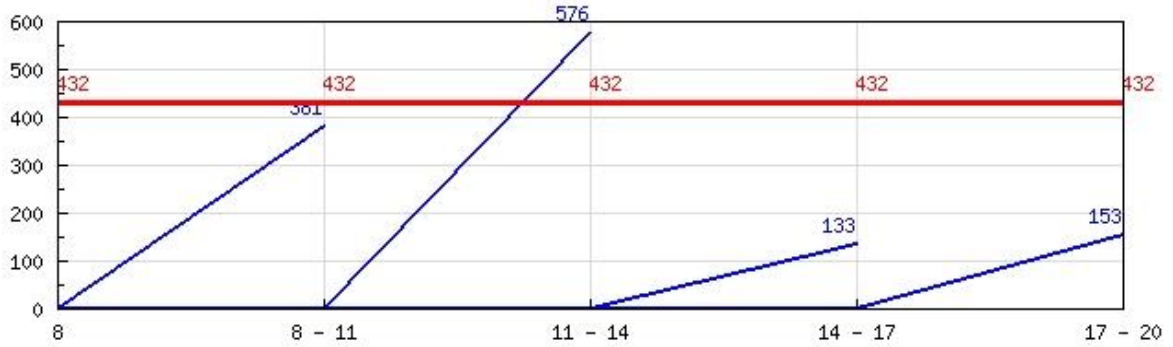
**Figure 2a**



- **Minimum duration of voting (in seconds) defined through timing measurements**
- **Average time (in seconds) spent for one person to vote, which was measured during each 3-hour period**

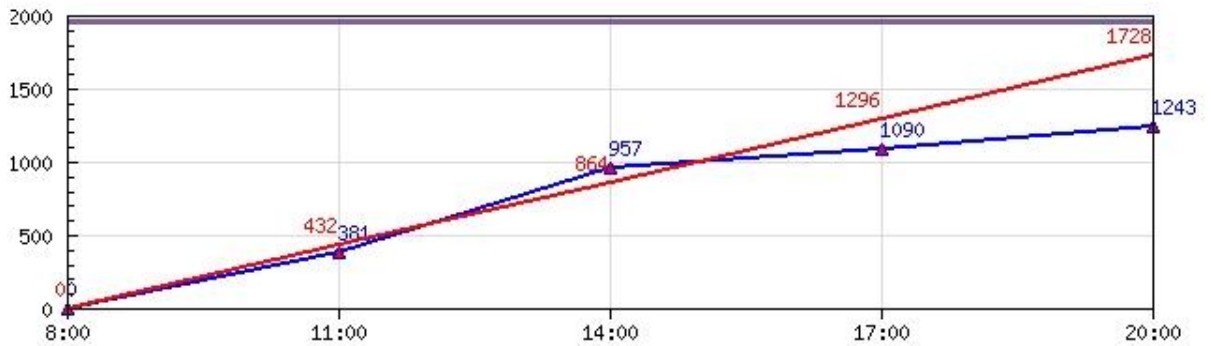
<sup>9</sup> Local independent observation missions did not register direct instances of ballot stuffing. However, as some participants of the voting process argued, there could be cases of indirect ballot stuffing, when the member(s) of the precinct electoral commissions secretly were putting signatures instead of those voters, who would not vote (the relevant member of the commission was already informed about such voters). After that, during the vote count additional ballot papers were added to those papers, which were extracted from the ballot box. The number of those additional ballot papers was equal to the number of the false signatures already put in the voting registers.

Figure 2b



- Maximally possible capacity for precinct  
(the possible maximum turnout in voting for each three hour interval,  
Calculated based on the duration of voting measured empirically (50 seconds)  
minimum duration of the registration of one voter for voting)
- Turnout of votes in a three-hour period for selected polling station

Figure 2c



- Number of voters in precinct.
- The possible turnout for each time interval, based on measured possible maximum speed
- Officially announced turnout of voters for 3-hour interval in the precinct

- In 2 precincts, namely 02/49 and 13/51 (see **Table 1**), the number of voters who voted at an earlier time interval was bigger, than that by a later time interval (“negative” turnout). In both cases this situation occurred at the end of voting day (8pm), meaning that,

according to official data, by 5pm the number of participants was bigger, than by 8pm.<sup>10</sup> Among possible explanations of such “negative” participation could be the situation described in the *Footnote 9*, with one difference, namely, during the vote counting, due to the vigilance of the observers and/or proxies, the corresponding member(s) of the precinct electoral commissions failed to add additional ballot papers to those taken out from the ballot box..

**Table 1. Precincts with “negative” speed of voting**

Marz	Precinct	N of voters	Turnout, %	Participation 8:00 11:00	Participation 11:00 14:00	Participation 14:00 -17:00	Participation 17:00–20:00
Yerevan	02/49	1466	62.69	240	300	440	-61
Yerevan	13/51	1059	72.62	190	267	405	-93

- The calculations of the voting speed revealed that in 44 precincts (number of voters participated in those precincts was equal to 63,247) the turnout of voters at a different 3-hour time intervals exceeded the capacity of the polling stations. The above brought Figure 2c for precinct 8/31 is one such example. The list of such precincts is brought in **Appendix 1**.
- In 438 precincts the numbers of voters participated in the elections, which were announced one hour after the end of voting at 21:00, differ from those in the final protocols of voting posted on CEC web-site by precincts on April 10. In 171 precincts the number of participated voters increased, in total, by 1,357, and in 267 – decreased, in total, by 1,268. In 3 precincts (10/25, 13/22 and 7/25) this increase was more, than 100 – 377 in precinct 10/25 (Erebuni district, Yerevan), 125 in precinct 13/22 (village of Taperakan, Ararat marz) and 112 in precinct 7/25 (Malatia-Sebastia district, Yerevan). In 3 other precincts (02/05, 29/49 and 21/29) the decrease in the announced numbers from April 2 to April 10 was more, than 100 - 396 in precinct 02/05 (Nor Nork district, Yerevan), 200 in precinct 29/49 (village of VerinPtghni, Kotayq marz) and 121 in precinct 21/29 (village of Zolaqar, Gegharquniq marz).

<sup>10</sup> In the precinct 02/49 it was announced that the number of voters who voted at by 17:00 was equal to 980, whereas by 20:00 the number of voters who voted was announced equal to 919. For precinct 13/51 the corresponding numbers were 248 and 155, respectively.

## Results of voting

- Similar to the 2013 presidential elections and 2015 constitutional referendum, the phenomenon of the positive correlation between the turnout and number of votes received by certain political forces was observed once more.<sup>11</sup> However, compared with the results of the mentioned elections, this correlation was much weaker this time. Another important conclusion from this analysis was that such correlation this time did not yield to qualitative effects, unlike it was in previous elections. In other words, the outcome of the elections would not change or change marginally, if there would not be the effect of positive correlation. Table 2 shows the relationship between the turnout<sup>12</sup> and votes received by the political parties and alliances of parties, who passed the threshold, set by the Electoral Code<sup>13</sup> and will be represented in the National Assembly (Parliament).

**Table 2**

**Relationship between the turnout and votes received by political forces  
represented in the National Assembly**

Turnout	Political forces represented in the National Assembly			
	Republican Party of Armenia	Tcarukyan alliance of parties	YELQ alliance of parties	Armenian Revolutionary Federation - Dashnakcutyun
≤55%	43.2%	28.0%	11.2%	6.5%
≤60%	45.7%	27.6%	10.9%	6.1%

<sup>11</sup> Positive correlation between the outcome and turnout of voting means that the votes received by one or more political force are directly or oppositely proportional to the turnout. This means that the percentage of votes received by the political force in the precincts with relatively low turnout is more or less, than the percentage of votes they received in the precincts with relatively higher turnout. As it has been proven by a number of well-known analysts worldwide, in the case of “clean” elections under any value of the turnout the percentage of votes received by the political force shall be of the same or approximately the same value, as the percentage the political force received overall in the elections. Thus, positive correlation could point to the occurrence of certain irregularities during elections.

<sup>12</sup> Each value of the turnout in the Table means that only those precincts are taken, where the turnout was equal or less, than the mentioned value.

<sup>13</sup> According to Part 4 of Article 95 of the Electoral Code, political party shall receive at least 5 and the alliance of parties - 7 percent of votes cast for all parties plus inaccuracies, to get seats in the National Assembly.

≤65%	47.8%	27.1%	9.8%	6.1%
≤70%	47.8%	27.3%	8.8%	6.2%
≤75%	48.3%	27.5%	8.1%	6.4%
All precincts	48.9%	27.2%	7.7%	6.5%

As it can be seen from the Table, independent from the turnout, the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) was getting relative majority, though under higher turnout values, the percentages of the party were higher. The only qualitative effect, which could be observed while looking into the “turnout-percentage of received votes” correlation, is that under turnouts lower, than 60%, the Republican Party would not get alone absolute majority of seats in the National Assembly after their final distribution, as it received based on the final results of voting.<sup>14</sup>In the case of other participants, there is slight negative correlation only between the turnout and results of the YELQ alliance of parties. However, their rankings as first, second, third and fourth largest political forces do not change depending from the turnout. It is also worth mentioning that none of those 5 political forces, which did not pass the threshold needed to gain seats in the National Assembly, could pass the threshold under lower values of turnout.

- Absence of strong correlation between turnout and outcome can be seen also from the individual results of voting by precincts. In 9 precincts with lowest turnout the winner was the Republican Party. The lowest turnout (18.02%) was registered in the village of Otevan (Talin district of Aragatcotn marz) and in that village the winner was the Republican Party with 95% of votes. Republican Party won also in the villages with second and third lowest turnout numbers. Interestingly, these villages are also from Talin district of Aragatcotn marz. In the village of Tlik the turnout was 19.53% and the Republican Party won with 64% of votes. Finally, in the village of Metcadzor the turnout was 29.71% and the Republican Party received 75.6% of votes. In 6 precincts with 100% turnout 4 were those, located in the penitentiary institutions. Those were Kentron penitentiary institution of the National Security Service (NSS) of Armenia, Vardashen penitentiary institution, Abovyan penitentiary institution and Goris penitentiary institution. Republican Party won in 3 out of these 4 institutions receiving 78.9% in Goris, 78.6% in Abovyan and 67.8% in Vardashen penitentiary institutions.

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<sup>14</sup> As it can be seen from the Table 2, for the precincts with less, than 55% of turnout, other 3 political forces, who passed the threshold, together would get more votes, than the Republican Party, meaning that as a result of final distribution of the seats in the National Assembly the Republican Party would get less, than half of the seats. However, even in that case, the current ruling coalition of the Republican Party and Armenian Revolutionary Federation – Dashnakcutyun would get the absolute majority of seats in the National Assembly.

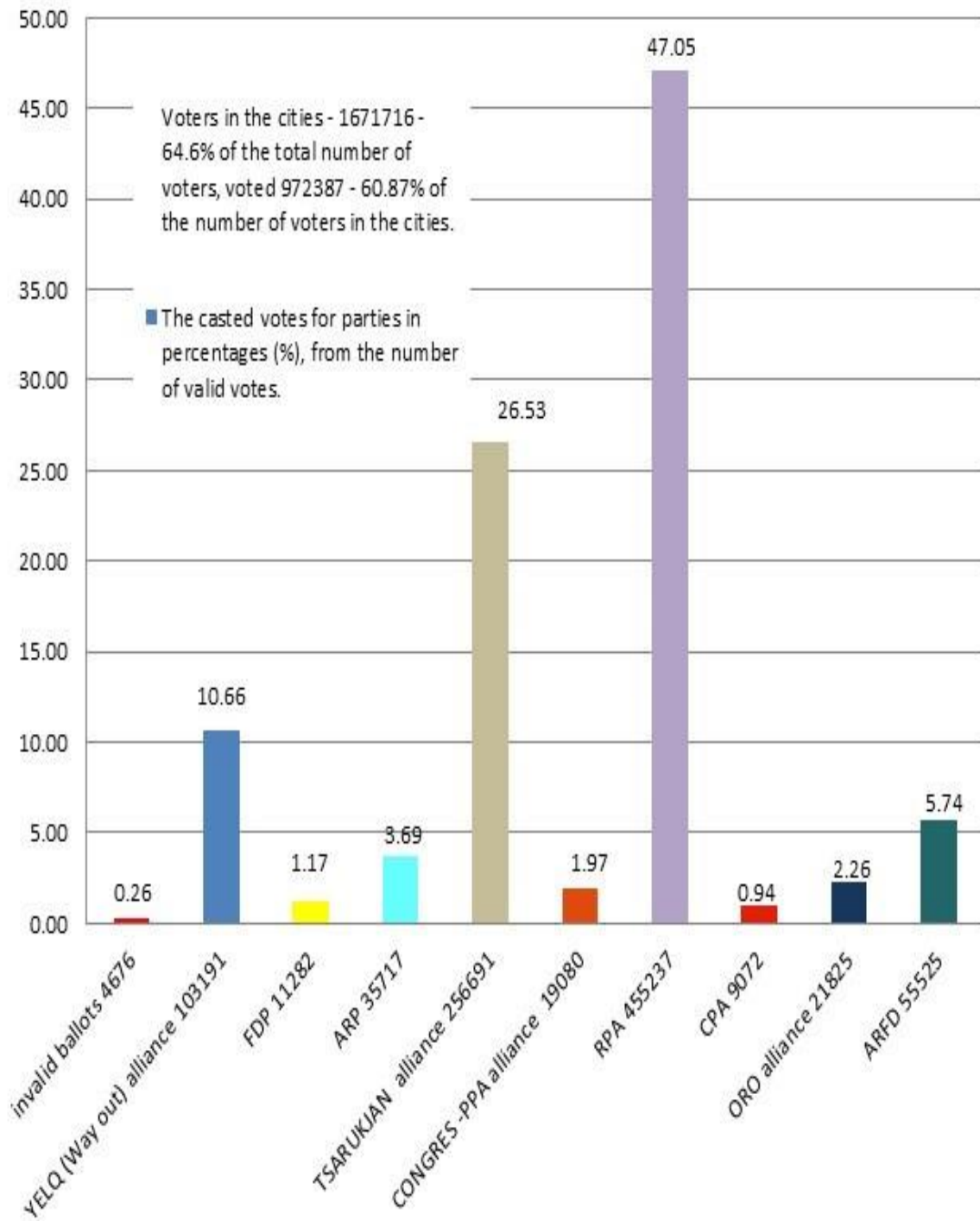
Interestingly, in Kentron penitentiary institution of NSS the winner was oppositional ORO alliance of parties with 54.3% of votes.

100% turnout was registered also in the village of Vanevan (Gegharquniq marz) and precinct 26/10 of the town of Hrazdan. In Vanevan the winner was the Republican Party with 53.5% of votes and in the precinct 26/10 in Hrazdan – Tcarukyan alliance of parties won the relative majority (22.6%). In all 18 precincts (among them 6 – in penitentiary institutions) with turnout more, than 90%, the winner was the Republican Party. In the overwhelming majority of precincts the winner was the Republican Party. In several hundreds of precincts the winner was the Tcarukyan alliance of parties. Besides these two political forces other parties that won in 1 or more precincts were Armenian Revolutionary Federation Dashnakutyun party (won 26 precincts), YELQ alliance of parties (2 precincts, both in the town of Hrazdan), Congress-HZhK alliance of parties (1 – village of Ttudjur in Aparan district), Armenian Renaissance Party (6 precincts) and ORO alliance of parties (4 precincts, among them, as mentioned above, Kentron penitentiary institution of NSS).

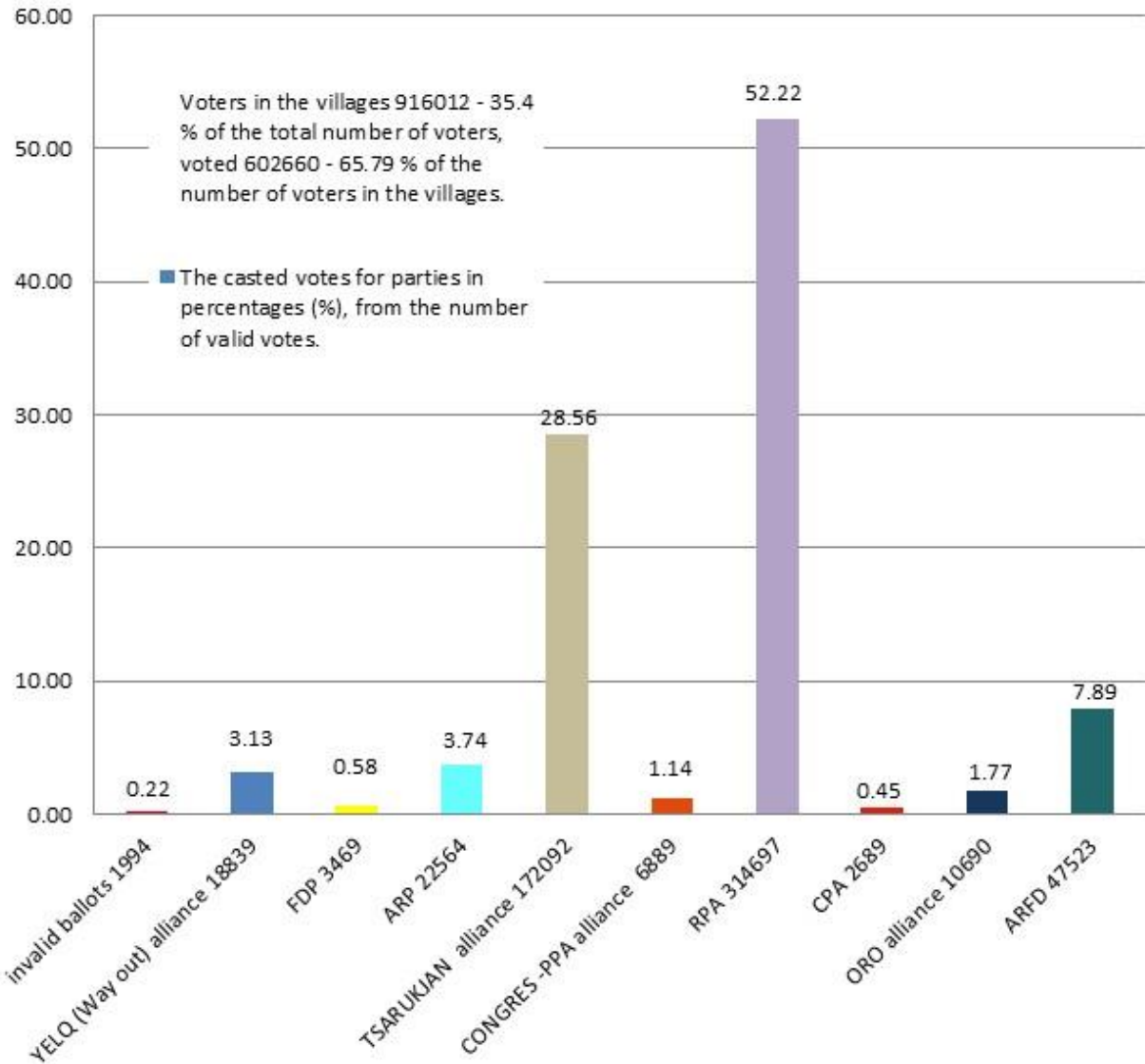
- While comparing the performance of political forces in urban and rural areas, one can see that 3 out of 4 parties and alliances that gained seats in the National Assembly, namely, the Republican Party, Tcarukyan alliance of parties and Armenian Revolutionary Federation Dashnakutyun (ARFD) performed slightly better in rural areas. In contrast, performance of the YELQ alliance of parties in the rural areas was much worse, than in the urban areas. Figure 3 shows performance of the participating political forces in rural and urban areas.

Figure 3

### Results of the Cities



## Results of the Villages



Besides YELQ alliance of parties, also Free Democrats, Congress-HZhK alliance of parties, ORO alliance of parties and Communist Party performed better in urban areas. Republican Party won the majority of votes in Yerevan and all marzes, except Kotayq marz, where Tcarukyan alliance of parties was the winner. In all other marzes, as well as in Yerevan, Tcarukyan alliance of parties was second. Finally, only in Yerevan, Kotayq and Lori marzes the YELQ alliance of parties performed better, than ARFD party, though nationally YELQ's result was better, than that of ARFD's.

- Though the number of voters serving in the units of army, police troops and border troops (hereafter – military voters), and numbers of precincts, to which these units are attached, are secret (see Part 12 of Article 8 of the Electoral Code), the total number of voters



mentioned in the precinct protocols includes also the number of such voters.<sup>15</sup> Thus, by calculating the difference between the total number of voters mentioned in the precinct protocol after voting and total number of voters mentioned in the voters list published by Police before the voting day, it would be possible to assess the total number of military voters.<sup>16</sup> There can be distinguished several precincts, located on the border of the territories, which are currently under the control of the Defense Army of Nagorno-Karabakh, with very high number of military voters. These precincts are (see <http://elections.transparency.am/2017/listanalyze.php?>): **20/52** (village of Sotq – 374 voters) **20/53** (village of Kut – 1,244 voters), **20/54** (village of Azat – 890 voters), **20/55** (village of Shatvan – 830 voters) **20/56** (village of Norabak – 315 voters) and **20/57** (village of Geghamabak - 204) in Gegharqunikmarz (province), as well as **34/01** (town of Goris – 105 voters), **34/13** (village of Khndzoresk– 333 voters), **34/14** (village of Khndzoresk – 49 voters), **34/15** (village of Nerqin Khndzoresk – 631 voters), **34/36**(village of Tegh – 907 voters), **34/38**(village of Kornidzor – 618 voters), **34/39** (village of Khnatcakh – 334 voters), **34/40** (village of Qarashen – 511 voters), **34/43** (village of Aravus – 820 voters), **35/05** (town of Kapan – 72 voters), **35/17** (town of Kapan – 637 voters), **35/28** (village of Davit Bek – 65 voters), **35/36** (village of Srashen – 260 voters), **35/37** (village of Syunig – 848 voters), **35/40** (village of Nerqin Hand – 254 voters), **35/54** (village of Tchakaten – 1,039 voters), **35/59** (village of Lernadzor – 60 voters) and **35/60** (village of Lernadzor – 94 voters) in Syunig marz. This situation can be also explained that these military voters were brought to vote from Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>17</sup>

- The project team decided to assess the effect of the introduction of the district proportional list voting in these elections.<sup>18</sup> In order to do that for each political force (political party or alliance of parties) comparison was made between its total number and percentage of votes it received to the number and percentage of votes cast for their favor

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<sup>15</sup> According to Part 9 of Article 10 of the Electoral Code, during parliamentary elections 50, 10 and 6 days prior to the Election Day, the Ministry of Defense, National Security Service and Police shall submit to CEC the numbers of voters registered in the units of the army, border troops and police troops, respectively. Part 10 of the same Article provides that those servicemen, who serve in such units by contract, shall be included in the precinct voters lists, as other ordinary citizens.

<sup>16</sup> Usually, the servicemen of military, police or border troops vote in the precincts, which are closest to the places of the stationing of the corresponding military units. However, it should be emphasized that the Electoral Code does not require voting of the military in the precincts, closest to their stationing places.

<sup>17</sup> Considering the fact of secrecy of the military voters' lists, it is not excluded that among them there could be also civilians.

<sup>18</sup> For the first time Armenian parliamentary elections were held based on the two-tier proportional list electoral system, when the voter can vote both for a particular political force and for one of its candidates included in the district lists of the electoral district where the voter is registered. There were 13 electoral districts in these elections.

by those voters, who did not vote on district lists.<sup>19</sup> Obviously, the conclusions from this assessment does not pretend to be very accurate, as the reasons why the voter did not vote in favor of any candidate of the district proportional list were various.

The assessment revealed that depending on the political force the percentage of voters who did not cast their votes for any candidate from their district lists varied substantially. Only about 2.6% of the voters (the lowest percentage), who voted for RPA, did not vote for any of its candidates of its district lists. RPA was followed by the Armenian Renaissance Party (3.7%) and ARFD (4.9%). The most percentage of voters, who voted in favor of a political force and did not vote for any candidate of their district lists of its favored force, had the Communist Party of Armenia – 21.75%. It was followed by the Free Democrats (about 17.1%) and “Yelq” alliance of parties (12.3%). Finally, if taken only such voters the front runners were “Tcarukyan” alliance of parties with 33.5% of votes, followed by RPA (24.6%) and “Yelq” alliance of parties (18.6%). Interestingly, like in the case of the overall results of the elections, only these same political forces together with ARFD overcame the thresholds set for receiving seats in the National Assembly.

**Table 3. Comparison of results of voting with district lists to the results without district lists**

	YELQ (Way out) alliance	FDP	ARP	TSARUKJAN alliance	CONGRES - PPA alliance	RPA	CPA	ORO alliance	ARFD
Total number of votes cast to the political force and its candidates from the rating lists	122065	14739	58265	428836	25950	770441	11741	32508	103048
Votes cast only to the political force	15009	2519	2153	27102	3046	19868	2554	3502	5081
Percentage of votes cast to only to the political force among total votes cast to that force	12.30	17.09	3.70	6.32	11.74	2.58	21.75	10.77	4.93
Percentage of votes cast to the political force and its candidates from the rating lists	7.79	0.94	3.72	27.36	1.66	49.15	0.75	2.07	6.57
Percentage of votes cast only to the political force	18.57	3.12	2.66	33.53	3.77	24.58	3.16	4.33	6.29

- Similar to the previous projects, this time also voting number inconsistencies and inaccuracies were calculated. The current Electoral Code defines two types of inaccuracies. According to Part 1 of Article 72 of the Code the first type of the inaccuracy is the difference

<sup>19</sup> Part 3 of Article 67 of the Electoral Code allows the voter to cast his/her vote only in favor of a political force without casting vote in favor of any candidate included in the corresponding district list (the district list of the electoral district where the voter is registered) of that political force.

between the total number of self-adhesive stamps given to the precinct electoral commission and sum of the number of stubs handed by the voters and number of unused self-adhesive stamps.<sup>20</sup>The second part of the same Article provides that the second type of inaccuracy is the difference between the total number of voters, who voted (which is defined as the same number as the number of signatures in the voters' register) and sum of the valid and invalid ballot papers extracted from the ballot box. If everything goes correct, then the total number of ballot papers in the ballot box shall be equal to the number of signatures in the voters' register. The same part of Article 72 also provides that, if the sum of valid and invalid ballot papers extracted from the ballot box is less, than the number of signatures in the voters register, then the difference shall be zeroed. However, in the software developed for this project such differences are not zeroed, as it is possible that there has been the "carousel" type of electoral violation, which could entail to such negative difference, meaning that there are more signatures, than ballot papers in the ballot box. The developed for this project software allows calculating other inaccuracies, which, though are not provided by the Electoral Code, also can be important for analyzing possible violations during electoral processes.

At the same time, the practice of elections in Armenia, as the impact of such projects revealed since 2012 when first project on the monitoring of voting numbers was conducted, the real significance of these inaccuracies is not perceived by the authorities, as well as political forces participating in the elections and observers from civil society organizations, which observe elections. This misperception also is reflected in the Electoral Code, where the calculated inaccuracies are only considered during vote recount, if the district electoral commissions have grounded suspicions that the precinct electoral commissions wrongly calculated some voting numbers (see Part 7 of Article 50 of the Code) or for defining how many seats should each political force that passed the thresholds get in the National Assembly (see Part 4 of Article 95) or the Councils of Yerevan, Gyumri or Vanadzor (see Part 3 of Article 141 of the Code) after counting the votes received by them during the corresponding elections. However, the real purpose for calculating the inaccuracies, as international good practices reveal, should be the **initiation of investigation** for each non-zero value of inaccuracy and **punishment of those**, whose actions, if it would be proven, entailed to such value of inaccuracy and those actions were deliberate electoral violations. If there will be zero

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<sup>20</sup> According to Part 7 of Article 67 of the Electoral Code, the voter, before throwing the envelope in the ballot box, shall hand to the member of the precinct electoral commission, who at that moment sits near the ballot box, the stub, given to him/her by the specialist, who identified the voter through the electronic voter identification machine. After getting that stub, the mentioned member of the precinct electoral commission shall put a self-adhesive stamp on the corner of the ballot paper, which is inside the envelope, with one corner out of it. Only after that the voter throws the envelope with the ballot paper into the ballot box. Thus, if the voting goes correct, then the number of stubs plus the number of unused self-adhesive stamps must be equal to the total number of self-adhesive stamps given to the precinct electoral commission prior to voting.

tolerance towards possible electoral violations, then the revealed inaccuracies will gain great significance in ensuring conduct of clean and fair elections.

The analysis of the official results of the April 2 National Assembly elections (posted on the CEC web-site) showed that there were inaccuracies in 675 precincts, including such inaccuracies, which are not defined by the Electoral Code. The total size of both inaccuracies defined by the Electoral Code was equal to 1,737. The unwillingness of authorities to investigate the causes of these inaccuracies, especially considering the fact that they were detected in more, than one third of the precincts, further contributed to the atmosphere of the impunity during elections and is a fertile soil for systemic falsification of elections in the country in the future.

In a number of precincts the sizes of different types of inaccuracies were especially large. In particular, in 177 precincts the number of stubs submitted by voters was less, than the number of signatures in the voters' registers. Largest numbers (8) were detected in the 8/17 precinct (Shengavit district, Yerevan) and 29/39 (village of Goght, Kotayq marz). The opposite picture was in 68 precincts, where the number of signatures exceeded the number of stubs. Here the leaders are precincts 29/29 (village of Arindj, Kotayq marz) and 38/32 (village of Khashtarak, Tavush marz) with the differences equal to 13 and 7, respectively.

In 295 precincts the number of self-adhesive stamps allocated to the precinct electoral commissions by the territorial electoral commissions was less, than the sum of unused self-adhesive stamps and signatures in the voters' lists. Largest numbers were detected in 35/18 precinct (town of Kapan, Syunig marz) and in the precinct 31/58 (town of Gyumri, Shirak marz). In 35/18 precinct it was equal to 22 and in 31/58 – 9. The opposite picture, when the precincts were allocated more self-adhesive stamps, than the sum of unused self-adhesive stamps and signatures in the voters' lists, was observed in 149 precincts. Here the absolute leader was the precinct 7/29 (Malatia-Sebastia district, Yerevan), where the precinct was allocated 100 more self-adhesive stamps, than it was written in the protocol on voting results of this precinct.

In 210 precincts the number of self-adhesive stamps allocated to the precinct electoral commission was less, than the sum of unused self-adhesive stamps and stubs received from those, who voted. Here the "leaders" were precincts 38/15 (town of Kapan, Syunig marz), 31/58 (town of Gyumri, Shirak marz) and 26/38 (village of Marmarik, Kotayq marz), which were allocated 15, 9 and 7 less self-adhesive stamps, respectively. Among 173 precincts, which were allocated more self-adhesive stamps, than the sum of unused self-adhesive stamps and stubs received from those, who voted, the leader was the same precinct 7/29, which was the leader among those precincts, which were allocated more self-adhesive stamps, than the sum of unused self-adhesive stamps, than the sum of unused self-adhesive stamps and signatures in the voters' lists (100). Finally, in 393 precincts the number of signatures was more or less, than the number of all ballot papers (valid and invalid) in the

ballot box. Here the most deviations were observed in the precincts 24/35 (town of Alaverdi, Lori marz) -16, 29/29 (village of Arindj, Kotayq marz) and 18/6 (village of Arutch, Aragatcotn marz) with values 16, 13 and 11, respectively.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Compared to the previous elections (2012 parliamentary, 2013 presidential and 2013 Yerevan Council) and 2015 constitutional referendum, during which TIAC conducted voting numbers monitoring, the major problems and risks persisted also during these parliamentary elections. Similar to the previous monitoring efforts, this monitoring also revealed that a) the voters lists still contain much more voters, than it is their actual number based on the current size of the permanent population; b) still substantial number of voters does not have addresses; c) there were still many instances of suspiciously very quick voting on the election day, in some cases, even exceeding the physical capacity of the polling stations; d) still there was positive correlation between the turnout and results of the ruling Republican Party, though the scale of that correlation was much smaller, than it was previously; and e) large number of precincts with different types of inaccuracies.

These elections were conducted under the new Electoral Code, which, from the standpoint of the concept of voting numbers relationships, on which the methodology of the voting numbers monitoring is based, provides better safeguards against possible falsifications and fraud, detectable through the application of this monitoring. In particular, the requirement for publishing the lists of voters, who participated in the elections, had serious potential to seriously diminish violations stemming from inflated voters' lists. The provision, mandating videotaping of both the voting and vote counting processes (see Part 11.1 of Article 8 of the Electoral Code) could minimize the instances of hidden ballot stuffing by analyzing the videotapes of voting by the participants of the elections, such as political parties and NGOs, observing the elections.<sup>21</sup> In fact, as mentioned above, the checking of addresses with 10 or more voters, conducted by the monitors involved in TIAC's other election-related project on the misuse of administrative resources, revealed few instances of voting instead of those, who emigrated from the country. This observation was independently confirmed also by other observers, as well.

However, despite of the mentioned legal improvements, the voting numbers monitoring during these elections revealed little or no positive change in the conduct of elections in Armenia. Among possible major factors that could explain this lack of progress are lack of sufficient level of will and resources by oppositional political parties and observation missions to effectively and comprehensively oversee the integrity of voting procedures, and unprecedented scale of misuse of administrative resources and vote bribing before and on the voting day. The latter factor was

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<sup>21</sup> To the knowledge of TIAC, any systematic analysis of videotapes has not been carried out.

confirmed not only through the findings of the TIAC's project on the misuse of administrative resources, but also by independent observers, political parties, media and experts. Utilization of more sophisticated, relentless and efficient methods of misuse of administrative resources, intimidation, harassment and vote bribing possibly ensured much higher real turnout, than it was before<sup>22</sup> and wider use of corrupt practices by the electoral commissions of different levels, accompanied by the deliberate inaction of law enforcement bodies and apparent reluctance of judiciary to punish the perpetrators of electoral fraud. Also, it is not excluded that serious direct or indirect (through relatives, friends, neighbors or colleagues) pressure took place on many observers even from independent and impartial local observation missions, as well as proxies and PEC members from oppositional parties.

Obviously, certain loopholes in the electoral legislation, some of which (for example, connected with the implications from the calculated inaccuracies) were discussed above, also contributed to the occurrence of fraud and falsifications. But the negative effect from these loopholes and deficiencies could be much less, if there would be genuine political will on the side of authorities to conduct really free and fair elections, and true desire and resources of oppositional parties to challenge the reign of the ruling Republican Party. To some extent, there is also need on the side of NGOs observing the elections to review and modify their methodologies of observation. In particular, they should put more emphasis on long-term observation aiming at disclosing the manifestations of misuse of administrative resources and fictitious voters and addresses in the voters' lists. On the Election Day, the observers, in cooperation with proxies should take steps at revealing the real sizes of turnout, as well as be more persistent in persuading the electoral commissions of all levels and law enforcement bodies to investigate the possible causes of revealed inaccuracies of different types.

Considering the issues discussed above, as well as the fact that the next parliamentary elections will take place after 5 years in 2022 (if there will be no *force majeure* situations), it is hardly possible that the government will introduce changes in the current Electoral Code in the coming 2-3 years. Thus, suggesting concrete recommendations on the improvement of the Electoral Code currently seems to be not so productive. Instead, now it would be more convenient to suggest more conceptual recommendations, which could become the basis for future reforms of the Armenian electoral system.

1. There could not be free and fair elections, if the legislation is tailored to the needs of the ruling political force and powerful oligarchic groups with vested interests in the elections, as it is the practice in Armenia for the last 22 years. Among the most vivid examples from the current Electoral Code are the territorial proportional lists and the requirement of stable majority. Electoral legislation shall be aimed at ensuring really equal conditions for all

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<sup>22</sup> As some cases of observations, and among them also the observation made by the author of this publication, revealed, the real turnout, that is the turnout, if only the actual voters are taken into account, could exceed even 85% in contrast to 61% announced officially.

participating political forces and broad opportunities for observers to oversee the electoral processes.

2. The electoral system shall ensure minimal countrywide recognizability of the candidates. A possible option could be pure proportional system only with proportional list of national level either without prior decision on who will be on the list or letting the voter to choose its candidate (only one) from the national list.
3. Oppositional parties shall work with electorate not only one month in five years, namely, during the campaign, but through the whole 5-year period between the two consecutive elections proposing new and fresh ideas. In addition, if the party does not have sufficient financial, human and material resources for such work and cannot get them, it should refrain from participating in the elections. The chronic lack of resources for opposition parties shall become a serious political issue both internally and for the international and foreign organizations from democratic countries, operating in Armenia.
4. Local observation missions shall review their methodologies of observation, focusing more on the prior analysis of voters' lists, counting the actual number of voters who voted and on persuading the disclosure of the causes of different types of inaccuracies.
5. Vote counting shall be more inclusive, than now, mandating inclusion of the proxies and observers in the process.

## Appendix 1

### Precincts with turnout of voters at different 3-hour time intervals exceeded the capacity of the polling stations

Region (marz)	Polling Station N	Total number of electors	Number of voters participated in the election, according to data published on election day	%	The number of voters participating in the voting from 8:00 to 11:00	Average time (in seconds) spent for one person to vote, during 8:00 to 11:00	The number of voters participating in the voting from 11:00 to 14:00	Average time (in seconds) spent for one person to vote, during 11:00 to 14:00	The number of voters participating in the voting from 14:00 to 17:00	Average time (in seconds) spent for one person to vote, during 14:00 to 17:00	The number of voters participating in the voting from 17:00 to 18:00	Average time (in seconds) spent for one person to vote, during 17:00 to 18:00
Yerevan	01/18	2006	1353	67.45	402	54	518	41.7	311	70	122	178
Yerevan	01/20	2187	1560	71.33	330	66	478	46	542	39.9	210	102
Yerevan	02/05	1629	1400	85.94	253	86	287	76	294	74	566	38.2
Yerevan	08/31	1966	1243	63.22	381	56	576	37.5	133	162	153	142
Yerevan	10/51	936	741	79.17	244	44	278	38.8	171	63	48	225
Ararat	11/09	1884	1267	67.25	240	90	275	78	235	92	517	41.8
Ararat	11/45	975	726	74.46	107	101	283	38.2	233	46	103	105
Ararat	12/31	900	716	79.56	154	70	277	39.0	214	50	71	152
Ararat	12/39	1914	1390	72.62	300	72	240	90	523	41.3	327	66
Ararat	13/07	1795	1127	62.79	304	72	236	92	528	40.9	59	366
Ararat	13/16	696	523	75.14	110	98	258	41.9	114	95	41	263
Ararat	13/18	1563	1186	75.88	210	102	340	64	525	41.1	111	194
Ararat	13/32	1930	1364	70.67	272	80	388	56	580	37.2	124	174
Aragatsotn	17/10	1920	1195	62.24	294	74	197	110	502	43.0	202	106
Aragatsotn	17/22	1952	1503	77	230	94	593	36.4	491	44	189	114
Aragatsotn	18/06	876	668	76.26	167	65	273	39.6	186	58	42	257
Aragatsotn	18/14	937	610	65.1	121	89	261	41.4	186	58	42	257
Gegharkunik	19/05	1621	1219	75.2	140	154	265	82	535	40.4	279	78
Gegharkunik	19/23	1980	1408	71.11	244	88	553	40	453	48	158	136
Gegharkunik	20/10	1132	912	80.57	133	162	212	102	532	40.6	35	618
Gegharkunik	20/15	778	570	73.26	77	140	279	38.7	166	65	48	225
Gegharkunik	20/32	824	656	79.61	134	81	252	42.9	217	50	53	204
Gegharkunik	21/07	1970	1190	60.41	120	180	500	43.2	450	48	120	180
Gegharkunik	21/15	1451	1065	73.4	175	124	240	90	502	43.0	148	146
Gegharkunik	21/38	998	750	75.15	138	78	256	42.2	266	40.6	90	120
Lori	22/04	886	576	65.01	120	90	262	41.2	147	73	47	230
Lori	23/50	1909	1111	58.2	186	116	534	40.4	260	84	131	164
Lori	25/39	975	637	65.33	101	107	270	40.0	108	100	158	68
Kotayk	26/37	991	683	68.92	225	48	277	39.0	128	84	53	204
Kotayk	27/20	973	698	71.74	160	68	257	42.0	197	55	84	129
Kotayk	27/24	805	599	74.41	128	84	282	38.3	149	72	40	270
Kotayk	27/25	2058	1334	64.82	350	62	250	86	505	42.8	229	94
Kotayk	27/26	2093	1441	68.85	320	68	530	40	355	60	236	92
Shirak	30/54	971	667	68.69	96	113	274	39.4	224	48	73	148
Shirak	31/45	1938	1026	52.94	300	72	80	270	515	41.9	131	164
Shirak	33/17	892	678	76.01	89	121	234	46	266	40.6	89	121
Shirak	33/22	935	701	74.97	141	77	285	37.9	212	51	63	171
Syunik	34/40	902	761	84.37	152	71	230	47	262	41.2	117	92
Syunik	34/43	946	878	92.81	194	56	223	48	291	37.1	170	64
Syunik	35/23	844	735	87.09	71	152	266	40.6	240	45	158	68
Syunik	35/56	1887	1582	83.84	403	54	573	18.8	481	44	125	172
Syunik	35/57	1917	1557	81.22	365	60	522	20.7	487	44	183	118
Vayots-Dzor	36/15	986	737	74.75	45	240	180	60	320	33.8	192	56
Tavush	37/30	994	720	72.43	150	72	203	53	277	39.0	90	120