



STATEMENT
of the GOLOS Association on the results of the elections of deputies for the
State Duma
December 4, 2011

Moscow, 6 December 2011

The GOLOS Association has conducted a large-scale monitoring of the State Duma elections. Long-term observers monitored the conduct of the election campaign in 48 Russian regions. Additionally, some 2000 short-term observers were deployed to 40 Russian regions as correspondents of the newspaper *Grazhdansky Golos* to observe the voting and vote-counting at over 4000 polling stations.

During the election campaign, GOLOS ran a “Violations’ Map” [<http://www.kartanarusheniy.ru/>], a web-site where Russian citizens were able to post violations they witnessed over the course of the election campaign. The Map has collected over 5000 reports, many of which are supported with videos and photos.

During the last week of the election campaign, as well as on the Election Day itself, the GOLOS Association faced a massive and coordinated intimidation campaign, which involved a court prosecution (the Association was fined 30,000 Rubles for an ostensible violation of electoral legislation), a mud-slinging campaign in the press, intimidation of its correspondents and staff members, DDoS attacks against its web-sites and hacking of its email inboxes. As a result, the Violations’ Map as well as the GOLOS web-site were not accessible on Election Day.

During the voting and vote-counting on Election Day, the Association collected over 1,500 reports of violations via a special telephone hot-line. Short-term correspondents of the Association were systematically observing legislative procedures at polling stations. The experts of the Association have been collecting, systemising and analysing this information throughout the entire campaign. The Association has built up a large database related to violations of the electoral code during the State Duma election campaign. In this statement, GOLOS draws attention to the most significant irregularities of this campaign.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

Drawing from the data collected during the long and short term observation, the GOLOS Association states that the voting and counting process, as well as the previous stages of the election campaign to the State Duma, including the process of nomination and registration of candidates, setting up of the election commissions and the process of campaigning, were overshadowed by numerous violations of electoral legislation, which could have affected the will of voters and, consequently, could have distorted the adequate representation of citizens’ interests in the highest representative body in this country. Therefore, the GOLOS Association concludes that the December 4 elections of the deputies

of the State Duma were not free and fair and that they did not comply with Russian electoral legislation and the international electoral standards.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The election campaign was characterised by repressive political party legislation and its biased implementation. Russian citizens were denied the right to freely associate and to establish political parties, which allowed for limited political competition. About a dozen attempts to establish new political parties before the election were unsuccessful.

The procedures for setting up election commissions failed to guarantee the independence of those bodies. On the contrary, according to the GOLOS observations, many experienced former commission members were replaced by incompetent bureaucrats with close ties to the authorities and the party “United Russia”.

In the course of the campaign, public servants at all levels, as well as heads of enterprises and other organisations, were openly campaigning for United Russia. They were using their offices to force their subordinates and employees to campaign and to vote for United Russia. Besides, United Russia enjoyed exclusive access to the press, while press coverage of the campaigns of other parties was generally superficial especially in the last month of the campaign.

RESULTS OF THE ELECTION DAY REPORTING VIA THE GOLOS’ HOT-LINE

The most common and evident violation observed was the denial of access and removal of persons from polling stations, who, according to the law, were permitted to observe the voting and vote-counting (official observers, commission members with an advisory vote). GOLOS received a considerable number of reports documenting cases, where those persons were allowed to enter polling stations only after voting had started, which is contrary to the current electoral legislation. In many cases ballot boxes were sealed without observers.

In some cases the observers and other accredited persons were removed from polling stations following direct instructions from upper-level commissions (such as in Ivanovo). Most observers were denied access and/or removed from polling stations in Ivanovo, Tomsk, Samara and Astrakhan. There are numerous reports of violation of observers’ rights such as bans on photo and video recording, forcing the observers to stay in places without direct access to the voting and counting processes, restrictions on moving around in the polling stations, denial of access to commission documents, non-acceptance of complaints and/or refusing to review the complaints on electoral violations.

The other most common violations reports received through the hot-line include:

In the course of voting:

- lists of voters are not properly bound;
- mass-voting using absentee certificates and group voting combined with illegal transportation of voters;
- multiple voting combined with organised transportation in buses;
- voting with temporary residential registration without absentee certificates;
- illegal denial of the right to vote with proper temporary residential registration;
- irregularities on voter lists: illegal marks, “dead souls”, missing voters;
- ballot stuffing;
- irregularities during mobile voting.

In the course of vote-counting:

- non-observance of the order of particular stages of the vote count;
- non-observance of the procedures of sorting and counting of ballots;
- failure to issue certified copies of the protocols immediately after the signing by the commission members.

ELECTION DAY OBSERVATION BY GOLOS CORRESPONDENTS

On Election Day, the correspondents of the newspaper *Grazhdansky Golos* filled out specially designed forms following the legally established electoral procedures. These forms were later combined into regional databases and then into a joint federal database.

According to the analysis of the forms filled out by the GOLOS short-term observers during the course of Election Day, the most common irregularities include:

- the results of counting of issued ballots were not announced (48%),
- information on candidates' income and property was not available at polling stations (47%),
- the final meeting of polling station commissions did not take place at all (41%),
- information on the number of invalidated ballots and on the number of ballots issued by the electoral commissions was not entered into the enlarged copy of the final protocol on time (36%).
- recounting of ballots (50%),
- mismatch in the verification balances (41%).

ASSESSMENT OF THE TENTATIVE ELECTION RESULTS

The results of the elections significantly differ from region to region. In 32 regions United Russia received less than 40% of votes (the lowest performance is in the Yaroslavl regions with 29%), in another 32 regions the party received from 40% to 60%, in 7 regions its numbers vary from 60% to 70%, in 5 regions the range is from 70% to 80%, in three regions it received 80% to 90% and in four regions it commanded over 90% of the vote. The Chechen Republic set the record with 99.5% for United Russia. The increasing number of votes for United Russia is coupled with the increasing turnout. Thus, in the Chechen Republic the official turnout shot up to 99.5%.

GOLOS also draws attention to the significant difference in United Russia's performance in different districts of the Moscow region, where the official results for United Russia range from 22% to 67%. Since the Moscow electorate is quite homogenous, this difference might testify to electoral falsifications. Statistical analysis of the official elections results also points to massive falsifications.