

Elections in Georgia - Runoffs in Main Cities to Be Held on October 30

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

On Saturday, October 2, Georgians voted on municipal elections. A day after the arrest of Georgia's third president, many viewed Saturday's elections as one of the most critical votes in several years.

With over 1.8 million people who voted, the total activity of the election was 51.92% in the country.

According to the final numbers published by the Central Election Commission, the runoffs in the country will be held in all five big cities, including Tbilisi, Rustavi, Poti, Batumi, and Kutaisi, among others.

In Tbilisi, around 45% of people voted for Kakha Kaladze, the current mayor of Tbilisi, and 34% for UNM's Nika Melia.

In Kutaisi, the representative of the opposition Khatia Dekanoidze received over 43% of votes, and Ioseb Khakhaleishvili received about 41.5%.

The second round will be held in 20 cities or municipalities. According to the legislation, the second round will be held 4 weeks after the first round, which is on October 30.

According to the preliminary data of the Central Election Commission, Tbilisi Sakrebulo will be staffed with representatives of 6 parties.

According to the CEC, the Georgian Dream, the United National Movement, For Georgia, Lelo, Girchi – More Freedom, and For the People have passed the mandatory 2.5% threshold.

According to the preliminary data of the Central Election Commission, in the proportional part of the Tbilisi Sakrebulo, Georgian Dream is expected to win 19 seats, UNM- 13, Gakharia - For Georgia - 4, Lelo - 2, Girchi – More Freedom - 1 and For the People also 1.

The Georgian Dream has also won 9 out of 10 majoritarian constituencies in



Elections in Georgia were held on Saturday, October 2

Tbilisi and already has a majority in the City Council.

The President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili assesses the October 2, 2021 self-government elections as peaceful, fair, secure, and competitive. She said that this election was very important and thanked the voters for it.

After voting in the October 2 elections, the President of Georgia did not openly express who she supported but said that she was in favor of "depolarization".

On the other hand, many of the opposition representatives talked about the problems that they encountered during the elections. Many complaints were filed during the elections due to alleged wrongdoings.

Representatives of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) held a press conference on October 3 on Georgia's local elections.

Albert Jynsson, head of the OSCE/ODIHR EOM, said that although the October 2 local elections were generally well run, the election process was taking place amid a protracted political crisis, with consistent allegations of intimidation and vote-buying.

The head of the OSCE monitoring mission also focuses on the characteristics of media work during the election period. According to him, the diverse media landscape was sharply polarized, and the acts of violence and intimidation against journalists are very concerning.

Shalva Papuashvili, a spokesman for the Georgian Dream, expressed satisfaction with the positively emphasized electoral reform by the OSCE/ODIHR.

Counting 100% of the votes does not mean final results as complaints about violations may result in the annulment or alteration of data in some precincts. The CEC will publish the results after the review of the complaints.

Before the announcement of the first results by CEC, there were several Exit Poll results released in the country. One of them was by Imedi TV and Gorbi, which initially showed that Kaladze would win Tbilisi without runoffs. Exit Polls of both Formula TV and Mtavari Arkhi showed there would be a second round in Tbilisi.



The total activity rate was 51.92% in the elections.



Runoffs will be held in main cities, including Tbilisi, Batumi, Rustavi, Poti, and Kutaisi, among others

Mikheil Saakashvili Enters Georgia, Gets Arrested

Saakashvili posted a video on Facebook from Batumi on Friday, October 1.



Saakashvili announced that he was in Georgia via a video from Batumi he posted on Facebook

Georgia's 3rd president was arrested on Friday.

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

On Friday, October 1, Mikheil Saakashvili posted a video on his official Facebook page, showing that he was in Batumi.

The third president of the country was saying that he was in Georgia and was ready to "fight side by side with the Georgian people" and support the opposition to win the elections.

The ruling party representatives spent the day convincing the population that Saakashvili had not left Ukraine and that he wasn't in Georgia.

Later on Friday, Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli

Garibashvili held a press conference, announcing that Saakashvili was, in fact, in Georgia and had been arrested by the police.

Soon after, the footage was released showing the arrest of Georgia's third president. The PM said that they were "deliberately trying to hide the information" about Saakashvili's location to make sure they could arrest him without any major issues.

The Prosecutor General's Office held a briefing on the arrest of the third President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. Prosecutor Jarji Tsiklauri informed the public about the cases in which

Mikheil Saakashvili is convicted and accused.

According to the prosecutor's office of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili has been convicted for the cases of Valeri Gelashvili and Sandro Girgvliani in three-instance court and has been sentenced to 6 years in prison.

The decisions made by the court in these cases are final and cannot be appealed.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has launched an investigation into the fact of illegal crossing of the border by Mikheil Saakashvili, a crime under Article 344 of the Criminal Code of Georgia. All necessary and procedural investigative actions are

being carried out in the case in an active mode," the prosecutor said.

Several people have visited and met Saakashvili after his arrest, including the members of the UNM, who have said that he is "standing strong." Yesterday, the President of Ukraine said that Saakashvili is a citizen of Ukraine and that the Ukrainian side will do everything to protect him as they would do in the case of any Ukrainian citizen.

The Public Defender of Georgia, Nino Lomjaria, also met Saakashvili and said that he was protesting his arrest by refusing to eat.

"According to Mikheil Saakashvili, he was arrested today in Tbilisi. He said he was alone when detained by the police. He didn't resist, therefore, no force was used during the arrest nor afterward. He says he's on a hunger strike. Also, as a citizen of Ukraine, he requests a meeting with the Consul of Ukraine," said Lomjaria after meeting Saakashvili on October 1.

Some people believed that the current president of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili would consider pardoning Saakashvili. However, Zourabichvili said that she would never pardon him."

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

Protest Rally against Saakashvili's Imprisonment near Rustavi Prison Planned for October 4

Weather

Monday, October 4

Day Light Rain
High: 19°C
Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 10°C

Tuesday, October 5

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 14°C
Night Rain
Low: 10°C

The National Movement is planning to hold a rally "Freedom to Misha!" in front of the Rustavi Prison tomorrow, October 4, at 15:00.

Information about the rally is spread on the Facebook page of UNM Chairman Nika Melia.

The third President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili has been arrested in Tbilisi. He was later transferred to the Rustavi Penitentiary, the video of which was released by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Prime Minister Irakli

Gharibashvili informed the public about Saakashvili's arrest. Shortly after his arrest, Saakashvili issued a new appeal urging citizens to go to the polls and vote.

Gharibashvili: Saakashvili's Entry Helped the National Movement with 7-8% Of Votes

Prime Minister Irakli

Gharibashvili says that with the entry of Mikheil Saakashvili in Georgia, 7-8% was added to the National Movement.

According to him, in addition, 7-8% cost "betrayal of Gakharia" and taking 47% against this background is a 'serious achievement'.

"It turned out that we won not 43%, but 47%, that is, we won convincingly, especially against the background that Gakharia's betrayal cost us about 7-8% of votes. Our observations and analysis also helped the United

National Movement, adding 7-8% to them, and in the light of all this, taking 47 percent and a convincing victory in 44 municipalities is a serious achievement," said Garibashvili.



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43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia
Founded by Prof.

Zaza Gachechiladze
Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli
Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze
Editor-in-Chief

Natalia Kochiashvili
Executive Editor

Khatuna Gogichaishvili
Layout Designer, Photographer

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