

Legal Entity of Public Law - Center of Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Trainings
Observation Report on the Election Day
2024 Parliamentary Election of the Republic of the Maldives



April 2024

I. Executive Summary

The Parliamentary Election was well-administered on a technical level. The Election Commission of the Maldives (ECM) – in each of its levels – showcased a sufficient level of professionalism and, thus, successfully fulfilled its mandate. This judgment is especially bolstered by considering the geography of the nation (1,192 atolls, to be precise) and the logistical, procedural, and administrative challenges it provides.

The Republic of the Maldives is a signatory to the main international treaties on democratic elections and human rights. The aforementioned principles are reflected in the local legal framework – be it the Constitution (2008) of the nation, the Election Commission Act (2008), the Parliamentary Elections Act (2009), and so forth – which provides for an environment wherein free and fair elections can be conducted and administered.

The members of the observed Polling Stations were professional and performed procedural duties (opening, voting, closing, counting) in an orderly manner. The aforementioned demonstrated the adequateness of the ECM's training efforts of election officials. However, despite the introduced measures to reduce queuing time, certain challenges still remain and some of the observed Polling Stations were overcrowded. Also, overly restrictive instructions on voting raised concerns about rejecting the will of voters on purely technical grounds.

The female representation was noticeable at the observed Polling Stations (the vast majority of whose members were women). Also, the ECM's effort to gather gender-specific and sensitive data must be lauded. The observed Polling Stations were accommodating to the persons with disabilities. For instance, persons with visual impairments were provided tactile ballots, separate spaces in the queues were available for persons with physical disabilities, etc. The aforementioned endeavors fostered an inclusive electoral environment.

The briefing session, headed by the Chairman and conducted by the ECM, for the International Observers was rather helpful in understanding the intricacies of the electoral processes of the nation (it must be noted that the Honorable Members of the Commission, also, provided the necessary context and answered the inquiries in a thorough manner). Other educational materials (such as handbooks, logistic guides, and so on) also aided the observation effort. Overall, the atmosphere fostered by the ECM was one of cooperation and goodwill.

II. Recommendations

This section of the Observation Report shall touch upon the recommendations of particular nature dealing with various voter and civic education programs.¹

Suggestions on Voter and Civic Education:

a. **Instructions on Voting** - one such measure could be to provide detailed instructions on voting via national campaigns on multiple mediums of communication.

b. **Targeted Civic Education Programs** - devising and implementing various educational programs to raise voter consciousness. The stratification of educational programs (i.e. targeting women, the youth, or persons with disabilities) would yield the most desirable of outcomes.

c. **Workshops for Professional Cooperation** - device courses and/or training sessions for the varying stakeholders involved in the electoral processes (the Media, Non-Governmental Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, and other interested parties) to bolster civic cooperation.

¹ This decision is guided by the working profile of our organization - Center of Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Trainings is established by Law of Georgia and deals with voter and civic education, capacity building programs for administrative staff of the Election Administration (CEC) of Georgia, various stakeholders and involved parties on electoral matters.