



Helsinki Citizens' Assembly - Vanadzor



SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE SHORT-TERM OBSERVATION MISSION CONDUCTED DURING THE FEBRUARY 12, 2012 ELECTIONS TO THE RA LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT BODIES



OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS -
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1 INTRODUCTION

On February 12, 2012, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor conducted an observation mission in N 14/01 polling station of Saralanj Community, Aragatsotn Region, in N 25/01, 25/04, 25/06, 25/07, 25/10, 25/15, 25/16, 25/17, 25/22, and 25/25 polling stations of Hrazdan Community, Kotayk Region, and in N 36/01 and N 36/02 polling stations of Pemzashen Community, Shirak Region.

The polling stations were located at:

N	Polling Station Location
14/01	Saralanj Comprehensive School, Saralanj
25/01	N 4 Comprehensive School, 170 Shahumyan St., Southern District, Hrazdan
25/04	N 1 High School, 19 Spandaryan St., Southern District, Hrazdan
25/06	N 8 Comprehensive School, Central District, Hrazdan
25/07	N 15 Preschool Educational Institution, 57 Central District, Hrazdan
25/10	N 13 High School, 53 Central District, Hrazdan
25/15	N 8 Preschool Educational Institution, 80 Micro region District, Hrazdan
25/16	N 5 Comprehensive School, 5 Jrrarat District, Hrazdan
25/17	N 9 Comprehensive School, Micro region District, Hrazdan
25/22	N 11 Comprehensive School, 14 th St. 14, Micro region District, Hrazdan
25/25	“YSCTC” Sports School, 13 th St. 16/1, Micro region District, Hrazdan
36/01	Pemzashen Secondary School
36/02	“Haypost” Post Office in Pemzashen

The observers arrived at polling stations at 7:00 a.m. and remained there until the voting results were calculated and registered the following:

2 ORGANIZATION OF VOTING

Precinct Electoral Commission (hereinafter PEC)

PEC Sitting

According to Point 1 of Article 62 of the RA Electoral Code, “At 7:00 on the voting day, at its sitting, Precinct Electoral Commission shall decide by drawing a lot...”

In 14/01 polling station of Saralanj Community, the members of the precinct electoral commission arrived at the station at 7:35 a.m.

In 25/01 polling station of Hrazdan Community, the PEC sitting was over by 7:00 a.m.

In 25/10 polling station of the same community, the PEC sitting began with a 10-minute delay.

Commission Stamp

Only in 5 of the observed 13 polling stations, the observers clearly indicated that it was confirmed to those present, that the commission stamp had not been used before.

In 25/10 polling station, the proxy, who requested to check if the stamp was dry, did not have the opportunity to check it, because the Chairperson soaked it in ink immediately after taking it out of the safety box.

In other polling stations, it was not possible to check whether the stamps had been used before.

The Ballot being signed

According to Point 7 of Article 59 of the RA Electoral Code, “On the day preceding the voting day, the precinct electoral commission shall draw lots at its sitting to select three members of the commission who will sign the ballot papers; these members shall be obliged to sign or seal with their individual seals all the ballot papers and all the pages of the lists of electors by 24:00 of the same day...”

In all observed stations, all ballot papers were signed by 3 members of the commission.

Presence of Proxies at Polling Stations

Polling Station	Full Name of the Candidate	Full Name of the Proxy
14/01	Robert Barseghyan	No one
25/01	Aram Danielyan	Rafael Ohanyan
	Sasun Mikayelyan	Davit Shahnazaryan
25/04	Aram Danielyan	Rudik Stepanyan
	Sasun Mikayelyan	Zoya Tadevosyan
25/06	Sasun Mikayelyan	Davit Matevosyan
25/07	Sasun Mikayelyan	Sos Gimishyan
25/10	Each candidate had a proxy	
25/15	Aram Danielyan	Makich Danielyan, Ashot Danielyan
	Sasun Mikayelyan	Vladimir Karapetyan, Yurik Bunaryan
25/16	Aram Danielyan	Aramayis Piliposyan
		Avetis Mikayelyan /14:45/
		Nver Hambardzumyan /14:15 – 19:00/
		Smbat Piliposyan /19:00/
25/17	Sasun Mikayelyan	Nikol Pashinyan
	Aram Danielyan	Albert Yeghiazaryan,
		Anik Grigoryan
25/22	Sasun Mikayelyan	Levon Zurabyan
	Aram Danielyan	Vardan Ghazaryan
25/25	Sasun Mikayelyan	Bagrat Andreasyan
	Aram Danielyan	Samvel Tigranyan
36/01		Vardan Grigoryan
		Kamo Muradyan
		Petros Arakelyan
		Rostom Gevorgyan
	Ananik Voskanyan	Petros Tovmasyan
		Aghasi Vardanyan
	Zhak Voskanyan	
	Surik Vardanyan	
	Yervand Mikayelyan	Aram Yeghoyan, Garik Eloyan
36/02	Yervand Mikayelyan	Arpak Yeghoyan, Vitya Mikayelyan
	Albert Petrosyan	Artak Hayrapetyan
	Ananik Voskanyan	Aram Voskanyan

In 25/01, 25/06, 25/07, 25/16, 25/25, and 36/01 polling stations, there were cases when there was more than one proxy of the same candidate. Thus, in 25/01 polling station, the observer from HCA Vanadzor discovered that there was a second unregistered proxy of A. Danielyan. The observer informed the Chairperson of the commission and the proxy of S. Mikayelyan. After about 30 minutes of “clarifications,” it was possible to ask the person to leave.

In 25/17 polling station, there were two cases, when 2 proxies of Aram Danielyan were present at the station at the same time; however, the observer from HCA Vanadzor informed the chairperson of the commission and the unregistered proxy was asked to leave the station.

In 25/06 polling station, only after a warning from the observers, the chairperson demanded that the second proxy of Aram Danielyan leave the station. The chairperson of the commission also made sure that the two proxies take turns instead of being at the station together.

3 CONDUCTING VOTING

During the observation mission, there were no cases of multiple voting by the same person recorded in any of the observed 13 polling stations.

Sometimes (in 14/01, 25/01, and 36/01 polling stations), there were cases, when the ballot paper was filled in by citizens outside the voting booth.

There were individual cases, when the voter informed the commission members or the proxy of a candidate about the vote. Namely, in 25/01 polling station, the voter marked the ballot on the way, showed it to the proxy of A. Danielyan, and put the ballot paper into the envelope in the presence of the proxy of the other candidate. However the latter did not take any steps and the remarks made by observers were left by the chairperson without any feedback. In 25/07 polling station, the observer registered cases, when the voters communicated with the commission members and proxies with some signs (gestures). In the same station, 2 or 3 elderly people spoke aloud about their vote. In 25/15 polling station, there were several cases, when somebody came in drunk and spoke aloud in favor of their candidate. This caused a squabble and the police interfered.

Some citizens wished to vote openly, stating that they had nothing to hide, but they were not allowed to do so. In 36/01 polling station, there were some people, who wanted to vote without approaching the voting booth, but the chairperson of the commission or proxies directed them towards the voting booth.

In 14/01, 25/01, 25/06, 25/07, 25/15, 25/16, 05/07, and 36/01, there were cases, when there were people present in the voting room, who did not have the right to be there.

Observation revealed that the rotation of functions every two hours of members of the precinct electoral commission was not conducted in 14/01 polling station at all, and it was partially conducted in 36/01, 36/02, and 25/01 polling stations. For instance, in 36/01 polling station, there was no rotation from 10:00 a.m. to 1:32 p.m., after which 2 commission members swapped functions upon the chairperson's directive.

The observers did not record any cases of intimidation or threats towards voters. However, in 14/01 polling station, the observer from HCA Vanadzor noticed some compulsion connected with appearing to vote, because the only candidate was the incumbent village mayor and the commission members were trying to ensure active participation by telephoning people, in order "not to be ashamed," as they were saying. The observer present at 25/01 polling station noticed a group of citizens, who were voting with great caution, "As if they were scared," and while the results were being summarized there were some ballot papers, which were folded

several times, as if the voters were trying to keep their vote “super secret”. Such voting ballots contained a vote for the candidate Sasun Mikayelyan.



In 25/01 polling station, the observer from HCA Vanadzor recorded that two UAZ Vehicles constantly brought people to the polling station and took them back. The license plate of one of them is in the photo. But it is difficult to say which candidate the vehicles were working for. The vehicles mainly worked from 11:30 a.m. to 5:0 p.m.;

as a result, there was a large stream and congestion of people at the polling station.

At 10:50 a.m., a white UAZ, license plate number 17 853, brought 6 people to 25/06 polling station. Citizens were brought to the polling station mainly on passenger vehicles. After voting the voters would come out of the polling station to look for the car which brought them there, in order to go back home; however in some cases, the cars would be gone. At 7:00 p.m., 2 people escorted a one-legged (his one the leg was cut from the knee and the other leg was bandaged) person to the polling station.

The observers at 25/22 and 25/04 polling stations recorded that passenger vehicles brought in voters for both candidates.

Voters voting for Ananik Voskanyan were brought to 36/01 polling station by car.

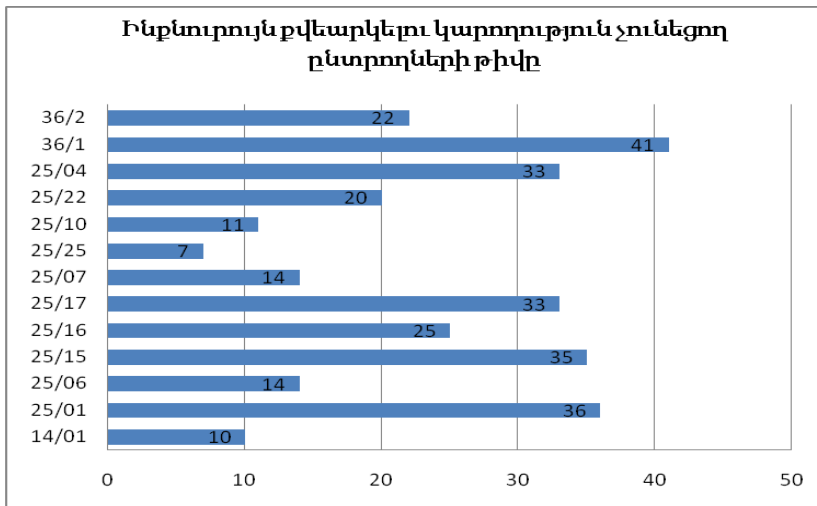
There were crowds of people at a radius of 50 meters from 25/01, 25/16, 25/17, 25/22, 25/04, 36/01, and 36/02 polling stations.



Description of Situation regarding Large Concentration of Voters

Polling Station

25/01	Mainly from 12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
25/04	Mainly from 12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
25/06	<p>There was no congestion of people observed outside the polling station. There was congestion in the room adjacent to the voting room from 12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The police regulated the entry to the voting room and maintained order. There was no congestion in the voting room. At the same time, it was difficult for one commission member to tend a list of up to 1000 electors (registration of the address of residence, identity, and passport number and receiving the signature of the voter), this intensified the congestion. The electors expressed their complaint but the chairperson explained the reason for the congestion and convinced them to maintain regular working atmosphere, for the commission to work quickly, otherwise the work of the commission would be more difficult in case of noise and violations of the existing order.</p>
25/16	From 11:30 a.m. – 7:50 p.m.
25/17	<p>As the polling station was right on the street, the newly arriving voters stood outside in the yard.</p>
25/22	<p>From the morning till the evening there were representatives of both candidates on the street across from the school, who were warned and removed by the chairperson of the commission and police officers. There was an office on the other side of the street, which had A4 size poster of Aram Danielyan hanging on the wall and there were people sitting inside until late night.</p>
36/01	In the morning
36/02	11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.



The arrangement of voting booth, ballot boxes, and the tables for handing out the ballot boxes was done as prescribed by law.¹

It is noteworthy that there were a large number of people who were unable to vote on their own. The observers recorded that these voters were

assisted by different strangers; there were no cases when the same person assisted several voters. Generally the voters, who were unable to vote on their own, were assisted by those who had escorted them to the polling station.

¹ Articles 55 and 56 of the RA Electoral Code

Description of Voting, including the Incidents and Violation by Polling Stations

14/01 Polling Station

1. The chairperson of the commission and four members arrived at the polling station at 7:35 a.m.; the secretary arrived at 7:56 a.m.; and another member (Alvard Vardanyan) arrived at 10:05 a.m.
2. The Chief of Police of Aparan entered the voting room escorted by police officers, but he was immediately informed that he did not have the right to enter the room and was asked to leave it.
3. There were several cases when the citizens would not put the ballot paper into the envelope prior to approaching the ballot box but would do it on the way, and when exiting the voting room they would wish good luck to the village mayor, clearly showing how they had voted.
4. The village mayor and some other voters would remain inside the voting room to chat after voting, but the commission members asked them to leave.
5. The village mayor came into the polling station several times. He was mainly asking if the commission members needed anything and was ordering to bring food for them.
6. There were numerous cases, when the citizens came in holding several passports in their hands, but the commission did not allow them to vote. The voters were apparently surprised by it.
7. A young woman came in to vote with a photocopy of her passport. The representative of the district electoral commission told her: "If there were only locals from Aparan, there wouldn't be a problem, but we have observers here, so you cannot vote." When leaving, the young woman requested to tell "Uncle Rubik" (the village mayor) that she had come to vote.
8. A representative of the Aragatsotn Regional Administration came in with his wife and hurried the commission to give him a ballot paper to vote. During this time half of the commission was having lunch, which is why it took a long time for the commission members to find his name in the list of electors. After receiving the ballot paper, the elector voted right in the registration table. To all persuasions and remarks that he did not have the right to do so, he responded that he was allowed to do anything he wanted.
9. There were several cases, when the voters were trying to vote together with their family, but they were told that they did not have the right to do so.
10. It was obvious that a soldier on a military leave voted for another person, because his name was not on the list of electors.

11. The polling station was extremely cold and the answer to the complaints was that they could not afford better heating, the heating fee was charged from the salaries of the teachers.

25/01 Polling Station

1. Order was not maintained in the voting room, more specifically, there were always people in the room, who did not have the right to be there.
2. The number of voters in the voting room would reach 35-40 people from 12:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m. The observers interfered to solve the issue, but without any result, and the chairperson of the commission told the observer: “You can write what you want and where you want; why are you going after all those trifles?” Whereas the chairperson of the commission was busy stamping ballot envelopes only.
3. There was not rotation of functions performed among the precinct electoral commission. In response to the observer’s remark about it, the chairperson said: “They finally got used to it and got acquainted with the lists, if they switch we will have problems again”.
4. During the voting, there was a case, when an elector came in to vote with a Form-9 from the passport office, where the stamp was incomplete, as if the picture was glued over the stamp. S. Mikayelyan’s proxy demanded not to allow the citizen to vote. But the demand was left unaddressed, while the chairperson of the commission insisted that he knew the woman and they were related. Eventually the citizen voted.
5. The chairperson of the commission had an argument with reporters twice, involving some squabble. In the first case, the resentment was connected with the reporter writing an article about the precinct, and the other case was connected with assisting a citizen who was unable to vote independently.



25/04 Polling Station

1. The Commission was not familiar with the scope of their authority and duties, as well as with the Electoral Code. Therefore there were some organizational errors, which were complicating the work.
2. The citizens were not properly told about the voting procedure and were not informed that they had the right to ask someone to assist them if they needed it, thus the citizens who needed assistance would go into the voting booth with their family members, and the observers and proxies were protesting against it.

25/06 Polling Station

1. Danielyan's proxy openly tried to obstruct the work of a reporter, who was taking a video footage of the voting process and he appeared in the footage. The observers and S. Mikayelyan's proxy interfered and the commission member prevented the violation against the reporter. And the reporter continued to work, while A. Danielyan's proxy left and was replaced by another proxy. There was no need for the police interference in the incident.
2. The reported and eliminated violations of the voting process were not recorded by the Commission. Only the data of the voters unable to vote on their own was properly recorded.
3. Once the secretary of the commission was studying the list of electors, but S. Mikayelyan's proxy demanded that the chairperson stop it, because there would be some suspicions about checking the list of people who did not come to vote and informing someone about it. The secretary stopped it and activity was never repeated.
4. A soldier, who was on a short-term leave, was not allowed to vote. The secretary of the commission found that the soldier had the right to vote and only after pointing out the corresponding article, the secretary of the commission did not insist on allowing the soldier to vote.
5. The voting room was not heated properly.

25/07 Polling Station

1. At 11:30 a.m., the flow of voters increased, especially from 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m., the chairperson of the commission would lock the door from time to time and apologize to the citizens and make sure there is no congestion in the voting room.
2. The polling station was extremely cold, which was impeding the work; some commission members and proxies had to go to the police room, where there was a heater, to get warm.
3. An elderly woman approached one of the lists after voting and asked: "Isn't there any money?"
4. There were some voters with mental retardation. The mother of one of them noted that her son was unable to vote by himself, because he did not even know who to vote for.
5. All observers and reporters were supporting Sasun Mikayelyan.

25/10 Polling Station

1. There was one case, when an elector came in to vote and it appeared that someone had already voted on her behalf and there was a corresponding note before her name. The commission invited the person, who had voted instead of the abovementioned person (both the commission members and the proxies remembered what the voter looked like)

and after checking his passport, discovered that there was confusion. The newly arrived voter was allowed to vote and there was a corresponding record made in the record book.

25/15 Polling Station

1. An elector came to polling station drunk and it caused a conflict.
2. Often times, there were more than 15 voters in the voting room at a time. For several hours there were 30-40 voters standing in line in the voting room.
3. The chairperson of the commission was biased towards some voters. In some cases if the ballot paper was not put into the ballot envelope, the chairperson would put it into the envelope without having the voter return to the voting booth, while in some other cases the chairperson would push the voter and rudely force them to return to the voting booth, to put the ballot paper in the ballot envelope and only then approach the ballot box.

25/16 Polling Station

1. Sometimes there was a line of voters formed in the hallway adjacent to the voting room.

25/17 Polling Station

1. At 7:06 p.m., the power of the polling station went off for 3 minutes, according to those present; the fuse blew after an electric kettle was plugged in. The observer from HCA Vanadzor, an observer from the Helsinki Committee Armenia, and reporters were at the ballot box and nothing extraordinary happened during this period.
2. During the entire voting period, the police maintained order; there was no fight or any other incident.
3. The number of voters was large at noon and, being unable to moderate the flow of people to the polling station, the chairperson of the commission invited some police officers and they regulated the flow. As the polling station was right on the street, the electors gathered in the yard.

25/22 Polling Station

1. During the voting, when the flow of voters was increasing, the police was maintaining order by allowing people enter in smaller groups based on their numbers in the list.
2. At approximately 12:10 p.m. a citizen was trying to vote instead of Benik Margaryan (his cousin). Aram Danielyan's proxy, Vardan Ghazaryan, noticed it and asked the chairperson to find out the identity of the person. The chairperson checked the passport and did not allow the citizen to vote (the citizen had put his signature in the list of electors and had received a ballot paper but had not voted yet). Taking away his passport, the citizen promptly left the polling station. The incident was recorded in the record book, the police

was informed and they quickly identified the citizen. 3 people from the Central Electoral Commission came to the polling station after this incident, they talked to the chairperson, observed the general situation and left.

3. The chief of police visited the polling station with two officers at different times during the day (3 times), he talked to the police officers at the polling station, then the chairperson of the commission and left.

25/25 Polling Station

1. A statement about the stamp having been used was recorded in the record book upon Sasun Mikayelyan's proxy, V. Grigoryan's demand, but the voting had already started at that point so it was impossible to verify whether the stamp had been dry.
2. A voter stated that, according to the list of electors, there was a person registered in the voter's apartment, who should not have been registered there. Sasun Mikayelyan's proxy made a record of the incident.

36/01 Polling Station

1. During the voting there were people at the polling station who did not have the right to be there.
2. Family members of one handicapped voter brought him to the entrance of the polling station and when the chairperson of the commission saw the person, he checked the voter's passport and sent a ballot paper with the secretary for the voter to vote at the entrance. In another case the chairperson himself brought the ballot paper to the voter.
3. There were cases, when there were more than 15 voters in the voting room at a time.
4. At around 4:25 p.m., the secretary of the commission instructed a commission member to copy the name of the electors, who had not voted yet; this was not done after the observer from HCA Vanadzor made a remark about it to the chairman of the commission.

36/02 Polling Station

1. There were cases of open voting (outside the voting booth), but the commission members interfered as much as possible by making remarks about it.
2. The flow of vehicles did not stop and there was congestion.
3. Occasionally there were people inside who were neither voters nor observers; they were saying that they were proxies, but they were not registered in the record book.
4. Rotation of functions of commission members was not regular, sometimes they would even switch every hour because of cold, they were moving to the electric heater to get warm.

The Behavior of the Precinct Electoral Commission in eliminating the abovementioned Violations

Polling

Station

14/01	The commission was actively working towards eliminating the violations
25/01	No action was taken even after the complaints from observers. <hr/> The observer turned to the chairperson of the commission, when noticing a violation. The chairperson immediately eliminated the violation. For example, when there was a large flow of voters, people were uncontrollable and would go into the voting room irrespective of warnings from commission members. When the number of people in the voting room would exceed 15, the observers
25/04	would inform the chairperson about it, who would ask the citizens to exit the room. At the same time, there were cases, when without warning the chairperson and registering, 2 people would approach the voting booth together, to assist a voter who was unable to vote independently. When the observers reacted to it, the commission would register almost all assistants. 3 people did not want to be registered and left the polling station. <hr/> The chairperson of the commission was very active in terms of eliminating the violations, only if there were violations recorded by the observers and S.
25/06	Mikayelyan's proxy. A. Danielyan's proxy did not alert about any violations because the chairperson, the secretary and 3 other members of the commission were biased in favor of A. Danielyan. One member favored S. Mikayelyan. <hr/> The chairperson and other members would immediately respond (double checking the Electoral Code if necessary) and would eliminate the violation.
25/07	
25/15	The chairperson of the commission would only react if the issue was raised. <hr/> Sometimes they were wondering how to handle a violation and would say that it shouldn't be done.
25/16	The chairperson warned Avetis Mikayelyan, who was a proxy of Aram Danielyan, 4 or 5 times, asking him to exit the room because he was not registered (another proxy, Smbat Piliposyan was already there); however the person continued standing at the door and observing, while talking to the other proxies. <hr/> The commission was actively working towards eliminating the violations.
25/17	
25/25	The chairperson of the commission and other members immediately reacted, consulted the Electoral Code if necessary, and eliminated the violation. <hr/> The violations were eliminated without recording.
36/01	
36/02	The commission members tried to correct the situation by making remarks.

4 SUMMARIZING THE VOTING RESULTS

All polling stations closed at 8:00 p.m. and immediately started the vote count as prescribed by law. During the vote count there were not people at the polling station, who were not allowed to be there.

There was no inconsistency in declaring a ballot invalid.

Description of the Process of Summarizing the Results, Including Incidents and violations per Polling Station

14/01 Polling Station

There were no incidents but there were some issues, namely:

1. The commission did not know that they had to cancel the spoiled ballot paper together with the unused ballot papers.
2. There were some technical errors made in the protocol, because of the secretary's incompetence.

25/01 Polling Station

The counting of votes was held as prescribed by law, there were no incidents, and proxies did not make any notes about special opinion or complaint.

25/04 Polling Station

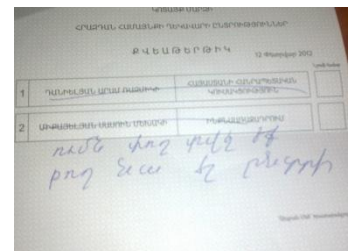
At 8:06 p.m. there was power outage at the polling station, which caused panic. The outage lasted about 10 minutes and there were no violations during this period.

The commission spent an hour and half counting the stubs and the lists and was still unable to figure out why the stubs were more than the number of voters based on the signatures in the list of electors. After the first count the stubs were more by 11 and after the recount they were more by 7.

After counting the ballot papers they found out that the number of voted ballot papers was also different from the number of voters.

25/06 Polling Station

1. While counting the votes, there was some disagreement about declaring some ballot papers valid, but they were solved after a heated discussion between the chairperson of the commission, members, proxies, and observers.



2. Reporters were able to video record the entire process of counting the votes.
3. There was an argument between A. Danielyan's proxy and a reporter connected with a video recording (the proxy found that the chairperson did not have the right take video footage of him as well). The chairperson interfered and informed Danielyan's proxy that the reporter did have the right to take footage.
4. It is noteworthy that one of the invalid ballot papers had the following note on it "Let the one, who you gave money to, vote for you".

25/07 Polling Station

The polling station closed at 8:00 p.m. and the ballot box was sealed. The chairperson asked everyone to put away all pens except for one, which would be needed for the secretary. The individual seals were also put away. The unused and cancelled ballot papers and stubs were counted, put in appropriate packages and signed in accordance with law. Before opening the ballot box, everything was done in accordance with the guidebook; the secretary read it out loud and the corresponding action was performed. After the ballot box was opened, the chairperson took out stacks of envelopes, put them on the table in front of him, took out the ballot papers one by one, read the candidates name, and passed the ballot paper to the person, who was collecting the ballot papers for the particular candidate. After all ballot papers were taken out of the envelope, the ballot papers in favor of Aram Danielyan and Sasun Mikayelyan, as well as the invalid ballots were double checked and recounted. After the recount, the protocol was completed and the excerpts were provided to those who requested them. It is noteworthy that on one of the invalid ballot papers the voter had written in Abraham Lincoln's name and voted for him.

25/10 Polling Station

The process of summarizing the votes went on without any violations, but the commission did not know how to complete the protocol of the results and was able to complete the protocol only after the HCA Vanadzor observer advised them on how to complete it.

25/15 Polling Station

There were no incidents during the vote count. The ballot papers were counted in accordance with law and were put in the corresponding packages. Before counting the ballot papers, the commission counted the unused and cancelled ballots and none of those present objected.

25/16 Polling Station

First, the commission closed the ballot box and put the tables closer. They lit a candle, in case the power was cut. They collected the seals and put them in a package. Then they counted the

unused and cancelled ballots and stubs. They asked to put away the pens and calculated the signatures in the list of electors. Then, the chairperson took out the ballots one by one and the ballots were put in 3 separate stacks: 1 for invalid ballots and 1 for each of the two candidate. The ballots were counted afterwards and packaged.

25/17 Polling Station

The polling station closed at 8:00 p.m. and there were no voters inside. The ballot box was sealed, the identity of those present at the polling station was checked to make sure there were no people, who did not have the right to be there. There were no such people. The chairperson of the commission collected the individual seals and put them in a package. Then the commission counted the unused ballots, the list of electors and the supplementary list. The vote count commenced by the envelopes being taken out of the box one by one. The ballot papers were shown to everyone and were passed to the commission member responsible for collecting the votes for the particular candidate. The summarization went in accordance with law.

25/22 Polling Station

Summarization of results went in accordance with law, without any incidents.

25/25 Polling Station

Summarization of voting went without incidents or violations. All decisions of the commission were agreed upon both with the commission members and with proxies.

36/1 Polling Station

Summarization of results went in accordance with law, without any incidents.

36/2 Polling Station

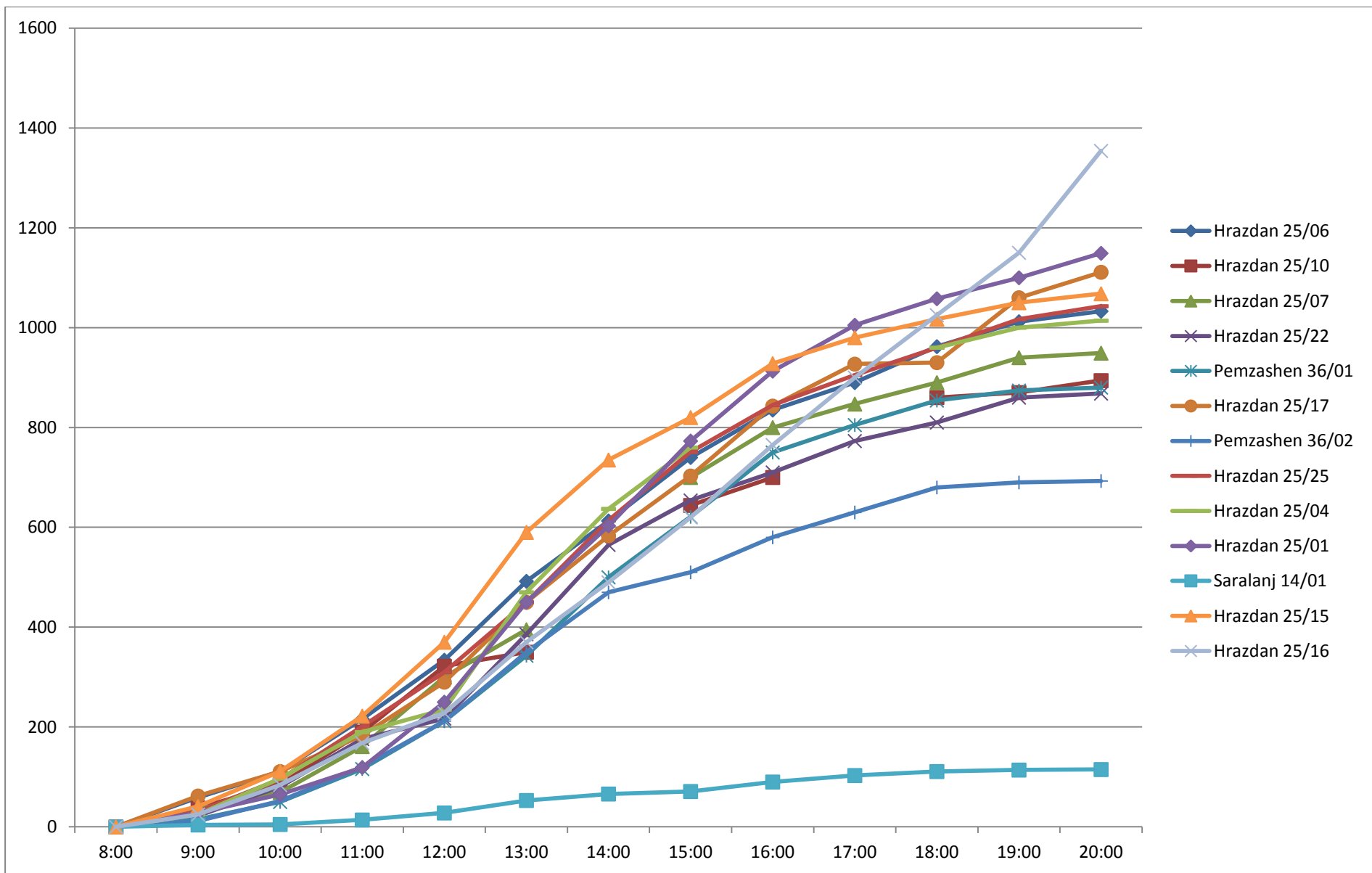
Summarization of results went in accordance with law, without any incidents.

5 NUMBER OF VOTERS

Polling Station	Number of Voters	Number of Participants in Voting	Percentage
14/01	182	115	63%
25/01	1786	1149	64%
25/06	1914	1033	54%
25/15	1813	1068	59 %
25/16	1890	1353	72%
25/17	1919	1111	58%
25/07	1719	949	55%
25/25	1869	1043	56%
25/10	1767	895	51%
25/22	1592	867	54%
25/04	1732	1014	59%
36/01	1258	883	70%
36/02	987	693	70%

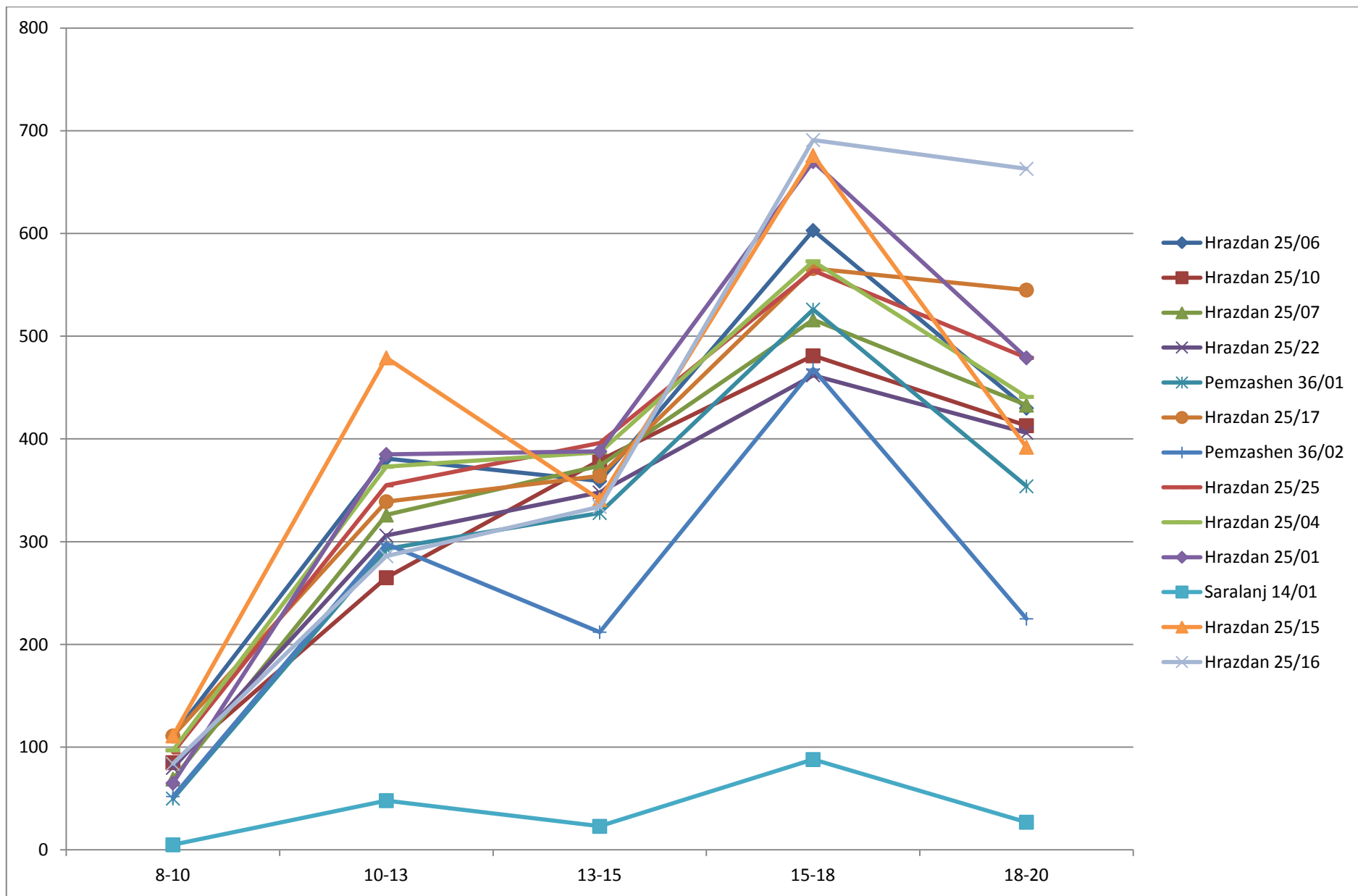
6 NUMBER OF VOTERS EVERY HOUR PER POLLING STATION

	9:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	17:00	18:00	19:00	20:00
Hrazdan 25/06	59	111	216	334	492	613	740	835	890	962	1012	1033
Hrazdan 25/10	38	85	190	322	350		644	700		860	870	894
Hrazdan 25/07	36	69	161	300	395		700	800	847	890	940	949
Hrazdan 25/22	22	80	176	217	386	565	654	710	773	810	860	868
Pemzashen 36/01	15	50	116	212	343	500	621	750	805	854	874	880
Hrazdan 25/17	62	111	183	290	450	583	703	843	927	930	1060	1111
Pemzashen 36/02	12	52	120	212	350	470	510	580	630	680	690	693
Hrazdan 25/25	31	95	201	310	450	614	751	845	905	960	1017	1043
Hrazdan 25/04	25	97	190	235	470	637	760			960	1000	1014
Hrazdan 25/01	28	65	119	250	450	603	773	913	1005	1058	1100	1149
Saralanj 14/01	4	5	14	28	53	66	71	90	103	111	114	115
Hrazdan 25/15	41	111	222	370	590	735	820	928	980	1017	1050	1068
Hrazdan 25/16	25	84	168	228	370	490	620	765	900	1025	1150	1354



7 HOURLY DECREASE AND INCREASE OF THE NUMBER OF VOTERS PER POLLING STATION

	8-10	10-13	13-15	15-18	18-20
Hrazdan 25/06	111	381	359	603	430
Hrazdan 25/10	85	265	379	481	413
Hrazdan 25/07	69	326	374	516	433
Hrazdan 25/22	80	306	348	462	406
Pemzashen 36/01	50	293	328	526	354
Hrazdan 25/17	111	339	364	566	545
Pemzashen 36/02	52	298	212	468	225
Hrazdan 25/25	95	355	396	564	479
Hrazdan 25/04	97	373	387	573	441
Hrazdan 25/01	65	385	388	670	479
Saralanj 14/01	5	48	23	88	27
Hrazdan 25/15	111	479	341	676	392
Hrazdan 25/16	84	286	334	691	663



8 CONCERNS, WHICH AROSE AS RESULT OF OBSERVATION MISSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Conducting observation mission at 13 polling stations of the RA Aragatsotn, Kotayk, and Shirak Regions, HCA Vanadzor recorded a number of issues. Connected with:

- **The formation, activity, and knowledge level of precinct electoral commission**

1. Description of Situation

The observers recorded that the members of precinct electoral commissions, particularly the chairperson and the secretary knew all community members in person and even stated that they exactly knew who would vote for who and if they wanted, they would make it so that the ballot of a person, who voted for someone they did not want, would become invalid. There were also cases, when the secretary of the commission demanded to copy the names of those who had not voted yet, to call them and to obligate them to vote. In some cases there was congestion in the voting room, because the voters knew the commission members and would be caught in conversation with this or that commission member. Moreover, there is no logical explanation for the following phrases in the legislation: according to Article 37 of the RA Electoral Code, “Members of Central Electoral Commission... shall have no right to belong to any political party... 5. Members of District Electoral Commission... shall not belong to any political party...”, and Article 42, “Members of the precinct electoral commission are appointed by: 1) political parties or an alliance of political parties, which have a faction in the National Assembly, if the number of factions is more than 4, then 1 member, and if the number of factions is less than 5, then 2 members.”

First of all, it is not clear, why the legislator makes a distinction between the procedure of formation of the central, district, and precinct electoral commissions. It is assumed that the requirement that members of central and district electoral commissions “shall not belong to any political party,” is a precondition for being unbiased, but it is unclear, why the same precondition does not refer to precinct electoral commissions as well; and consequently, the latter are openly biased during the voting process.

Recommendations on Improving the Situation

1. Make an amendment to the RA Electoral Code, according to which, precinct electoral commission members shall not belong to any political party either.
2. Form the precinct electoral commissions from detached members (who do not live in the same community), which will promote the increase of impartiality and neutrality.

2. Description of Situation

In some polling stations the rotation of functions among commission members was conducted every 2 hours, as it is prescribed by Article 62 of the RA Electoral Code: “1. At 07:00 of the voting day, at the sitting held at the polling station, the precinct electoral commission shall, by drawing lots, decide upon...: 5) the rotation of functions every two hours of members of the precinct electoral commission.” But it should be noted that the legislation is unclear. In particular, according to law, the functions of the commission members are assigned by drawing a lot and should rotate. After the first lot for the period between 8:00-10:00 a.m., it is unclear how the further rotation is decided, by drawing lots or simply by switching. In case of drawing lots for every 2-hour time slot, it is possible for the same person to perform the same functions during the entire voting process, thus the principle of rotation of functions would not be observed.

Recommendations on Improving the Situation

Legislation can clearly state that after the first lot, the functions for the rest of the time slots will be assigned by moving one step.

3. Description of Situation

Some of the flaws were for technical reasons; however there were cases, when the problems were caused by the low level of awareness by commission members, who were incompetent of their obligations and were unaware of the requirements of the Electoral Code. Thus, for instance, in some polling stations, there were problems, when a person would come in and see that someone had already voted for him/her; and the commission members did not know what to do, where to record the violation and how. In some polling stations (among them: 14/01, 25/04, 25/10, and 36/01 polling stations) the commission was not fully knowledgeable of the process of summarizing the voting results, particularly, in case of discrepancy between the number of used stubs, registered voters and used ballots, the commission did not know what to do and how to record the results. There were cases, when the protocol was completed with assistance from observers.

Recommendations on Improving the Situation

It is necessary to organize intensive trainings for commission members (preferably 1-month long). As a result of this training the latter will be knowledgeable of the electoral code and CEC decisions, and will have an opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the scope of rights and obligations of the precinct electoral commission.

- **The Registration of Observation Mission and the Impartiality of Organizations conducting an Observation Mission**

4. Description of Situation

According to Decision N36-N of the RA CEC from July 29, 2011, on “Determining the procedure of organizing and conducting professional trainings for holding elections and issuing qualifications; and confirming the forms of applications for participating in the trainings and certificates of qualification for engaging in the electoral commission and conducting observation mission,” “2. The trainings may be organized for the representatives (hereinafter, observer) from those non-governmental organizations registered in the Republic of Armenia, which want to be present at the sittings of the electoral commissions and in the voting room during the voting, within the framework of conducting an observation mission.”

34 representatives from HCA Vanadzor participated in the abovementioned training and received certificates based on Point 22 of the aforementioned decision (“The right to be present at the sittings of the electoral commission and in the voting room during the voting, and a certificate to conduct an observation mission is issued to the observer, who receives at least 21 points for the knowledge test”).

According to Point 2 of Article 30 of the RA Electoral Code, “Applications for making alterations (supplements) to the list of observers accredited or those to be accredited shall be submitted to the Central Electoral Commission after calling elections, but not later than ten days before the voting day.” Point 7 of the same article states: the procedure for accreditation of observers, the list of documents and information necessary for accreditation of observers, forms of their certificates and the procedure for completing thereof shall be defined by the Central Electoral Commission.

According to Decision N37-N of the RA CEC from July 29, 2011 on “Accreditation of observers, the list of documents and information necessary for accreditation of observers, and for completing the certificates,” “5. Local observers shall have the right to be present at the sittings of the electoral commission and during the voting in the polling station (in the voting room), if besides the certificate of accreditation, they have a certificate of conducting observation mission or a certificate of engaging in the electoral commission received for passing the knowledge test.”

Thus, although according to Decision N36-N of the RA CEC from July 29, 2011, the observer shall have the right to be present at the sittings of the electoral commission and in the voting room during the voting, if passing the knowledge test and receiving a certificate; however, according to Decision N37-N of the RA CEC from July 29, 2011, the same observer, who has the document issued by the CEC, entitling to perform distinct functions, has to re-apply to the CEC to receive another certificate allowing to conduct an observation mission (despite the fact that the person already has such document), provided that the person has the certificate

obtained based on the knowledge test prescribed by Decision N 36, allowing him/her to be present at the sittings of the electoral commission and in the voting room during the voting. Therefore, there is an apparent bureaucracy here, which is time-consuming and pointless.

Recommendations on Improving the Situation

Define that Decision N37-N of the RA CEC from July 29, 2011 is applicable only to those observers who have not received a certificate based on Decision N36-N of the RA CEC from July 29, 2011, confirming that the observer has the right to be present at the sittings of the electoral commission and in the voting room during the voting.

5. Description of Situation

It is very troubling that some observers were openly biased toward this or that candidate. There were even cases, when the pre-election staff organized breaks for some observers. Information provided by these observers is, as a rule, subjective and does not always correspond to reality.

- **Clarification of Police-Commission Relations**

6. Description of Situation

The chief of police department visited 25/06 Polling Station at 6:00 p.m., and although he did not enter the voting room, he had a private conversation with the chairperson of the commission in the police room or in the hallway.

At 08:50 a.m., a police officer appointed to the polling station asked chairperson about the number of voters, who had already voted. S. Mikayelyan's proxy found the demand unlawful (Every 3 hours the commission informs the District Electoral Commission about the number of voters) and although the chairperson complained but nevertheless, did not provide the number. At the same time, he told on the phone (to an unknown individual) that S. Mikayelyan's proxy did not allow it (whereas it is required by law and not the proxy). The chief of police department visited several other polling stations as presented above.

There was even a case in 25/06 Polling Station, when the chairperson verbally requested a police officer to maintain order at the polling station and the officer declared the chairperson should make a written request for it; whereas Article 5 of the RA Electoral Code states that the central and regional entities of the RA Police, their services and subdivisions are obligated to ensure smooth elections and unconstrained activity of electoral commissions and their members. The RA Police ensure proper order during any events connected with elections; assist the commission upon the chairperson's request, and ensure safe transportation of election documents and their maintenance at the polling station.

Recommendations on Improving the Situation

Clarify the procedure and scope of relations between the police and commissions.

- The Large Number of Invalid Ballots

7. Description of Situation

The number of invalid ballots was rather high. Thus:

Polling Station number	Number of voters based on signatures	Number of invalid ballots	Percentage
Total	25480	893	3.5 %
Hrazdan			
25/1	1149	27	2.3 %
25/2	938	44	4.7 %
25/3	1031	32	3.1 %
25/4	1014	47	4.6 %
25/5	1140	42	3.7 %
25/6	1033	52	5.0 %
25/7	949	39	4.1 %
25/8	767	39	5.1 %
25/9	796	25	3.1%
25/10	894	29	3.2 %
25/11	636	20	3.1 %
25/12	777	32	4.1 %
25/13	1315	13	1.0 %
25/14	900	11	1.2 %
25/15	1068	50	4.7 %
25/16	1354	45	3.3 %
25/17	1111	51	4.6 %
25/18	980	39	4.0 %
25/19	740	34	4.6 %
25/20	812	24	3.0 %
25/21	1104	48	4.3 %
25/22	868	33	3.8 %
25/23	825	32	3.9 %
25/24	836	19	2.3 %
25/25	1043	42	4.0 %
25/26	1034	22	2.1 %
25/27	366	2	0.5 %
Saralanj			
14/1	115	3	2.6 %
Pemzashen			
Total	1573	34	2.2 %
36/1	880	19	2.2 %
36/2	693	15	2.2 %

HCA Vanadzor, as a human rights organization, discussing the needs of its beneficiaries in the upcoming elections, and valuing the ongoing and future reforms directed towards conducting free, fair, and transparent elections, presents the following recommendation: to include the “Against all” box in the ballot for all national and local elections.

The recommendation is based on the principle that in case of not voting for any candidate the voter can still express his/her position, which will be considered when summarizing the voting results.

Our experience of observing elections shows that there are numerous cases, when the voters, who are against all, refrain from participating in the elections, which results in a significant decrease of participation in elections or are forced to leave the ballot incomplete or make it invalid by making notes on it. The table above clearly illustrates it. In this case the ballot paper is considered invalid, although the voter clearly expresses his/her opinion. Thus, the voters, whose position is “Against all”, participate in the elections but their votes are considered invalid, which in essence, is a violation of their suffrage.