



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
to the Election Observation Mission in Georgia of the OSCE  
Parliamentary Assembly**

**Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-  
operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA)**

**Georgia  
May 17-22, 2008**

# Report

On May 21, 2008, Senator Consiglio Di Nino and Mr. Peter Goldring, M.P., took part in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly's International Election Observation Mission of the parliamentary elections in Georgia.

The May 21, 2008 parliamentary elections were originally scheduled for later in the year and were brought forward following a plebiscite which was held simultaneously with the January 5, 2008 presidential election. In the period following the presidential election, a series of improvements to the electoral process were introduced. In spite of the improvements, distinct challenges remained which must be addressed in order to overcome a lack of trust, and to instill broad confidence amongst election stakeholders and the public.

The May 21 parliamentary elections in Georgia were not perfect, but according to a statement released by the OSCE-led International Election Observation Mission, "...Voters were offered a wide array of choices to select their representatives. The legal framework was generally conducive to the conduct of democratic elections, although remaining inconsistencies negatively affected its implementation".

Parties were able to campaign actively, but there were numerous allegations of intimidation, some of which could be verified. The distinction between state activities and the government party's campaign was often blurred. The media, in particular public television, offered voters a diverse range of views. The election administration worked in a transparent manner, but election commissions and courts generally did not give due consideration to complaints.

Election day was calm overall and was generally assessed as positive, although problems with inking and instances of pressure on observers and proxies were noted. Counting and tabulation was evaluated less positively, with many significant procedural shortcomings observed.

Special Coordinator of the OSCE short-term observers and head of the OSCE PA delegation, João Soares said, "These elections were not perfect, but since I was here in January for the presidential election, concrete and substantial progress has been made. Problems and much work remain. I hope all political forces in this country will come together and continue to work to improve Georgia's democracy."

Some 71 parliamentarians and 400 short-term observers monitored the election for the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), the European Parliament (EP), and that NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA).

These elections followed a period of unrest, beginning on 7 November 2007, when a newly formed bloc of opposition parties called demonstrations which lasted 6 days and culminated in the violent dispersal of protesters by police. The protesters demanded the rescheduling of parliamentary elections from autumn to spring 2008, the

transformation of Georgia into a parliamentary republic and the resignation of then-President Mikheil Saakashvili. On the same day, a state of emergency was imposed by the President, who asserted that the protests were part of an attempt to overthrow the Government. The state of emergency was lifted on 16 November.

Following the presidential elections in January 2008, the newly re-elected President of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, on March 21, 2008, called parliamentary elections for May 21, 2008, following a plebiscite which was held simultaneously with the January 5, 2008 presidential election.

The new parliament has 150 members – 75 elected proportionally based on national party lists, and 75 elected from single-mandate constituencies.

There are neither legal barriers to the participation of women in elections, nor legal provisions to promote their participation. While there are some prominent women in politics, women are overall under-represented, and few women candidates were highly visible in the campaign. There are no rules regarding women on candidate lists, but all major political parties had at least one female among the top ten of their proportional lists. Overall, 28 per cent of candidates on proportional lists were women, while 12 per cent of candidates in single-mandate districts were women.

Matyas Eörsi, head of the delegation of the Council of Europe said, “The Georgian people expressed their political will in yesterday’s elections. They did so in the hope of putting an end to a political conflict and the start of a new dialogue between all political forces in this country. Despite improvements to the election environment these elections did not make full use of the democratic potential of Georgia. All political forces should now commit themselves to constructive dialogue and compromise in order to address Georgia’s many challenges”.

Members of the Canadian Delegation were deployed to various areas both within and outside of the capital city of Tbilisi.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. David Tilson, M.P.  
Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation  
in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA)

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA)
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Election Observation Mission in Georgia
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Georgia
<b>DATES</b>	May 17-22, 2008
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Senator Consiglio Di Nino
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Peter Goldring, M.P.
STAFF	
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$9,174.26</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$1,844.98</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$1,917.44</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12,936.68</b>