

Preliminary Statement of the IRI International Observation Mission to Ukraine March 31, 2019 Presidential Election

APRIL 1, 2019

Overview of the Mission

This preliminary statement is offered by the international observation mission of the International Republican Institute for Ukraine's March 31, 2019, presidential election.

Through this statement, IRI seeks to reflect the international community's interest in and support for democratic electoral processes in Ukraine, provide an accurate and impartial report on the electoral process to date, and offer recommendations to consolidate democratic gains and improve future elections. The statement builds upon observations made on Election Day by IRI's delegation, the findings of IRI's long-term observers who deployed across Ukraine in early March, additional reports prepared by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and other monitoring missions, and supplemental IRI monitoring efforts by its in-country staff.

Since arriving in-country, IRI's long-term observers monitored developments in over 54 electoral districts (District Election Commission, DEC), held 470 meetings and attended 18 electoral trainings for election commissioners.

The 30-person mission, with members from eight countries, was co-led by Mrs. Cindy McCain and IRI President Daniel Twining. The mission consisted of six teams of long-term observers, consisting of 12 observers in total, and nine teams of short-term observers, consisting of 18 observers. The areas of responsibility for IRI's long-term observers were the regions (*oblasts*) of Volyn and Lviv; Zakarpattia; Odesa; Kherson and Mykolaiv; Zaporizhzhia; and Donetsk and Luhansk. IRI's short-term observers had coverage of Odesa, Kharkiv, Poltava, Vinnytsia, Volyn, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Kyiv regions. These regions were selected in consultation with the U.S. Agency for International Development for their particular relevance to the current political context in Ukraine.

The mission conducted its activities in accordance with Ukrainian law and the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation. The mission collaborated closely with the election commission, representatives of political parties and candidates, Ukrainian civil society, media, and local authorities. Additionally, IRI collaborated with NDI and other international monitoring missions supporting the electoral process in Ukraine.

The mission is grateful for the hospitality and cooperation it received from the Ukrainian authorities and the various levels of election administration bodies with whom it met, and all other stakeholders supporting the successful implementation of the electoral process.

The mission stresses that this statement is preliminary in nature; the tabulation and announcement of official results have not concluded, and IRI will continue to observe the remaining phases of the electoral process. Additionally, the mission recognizes that, ultimately, it is the people of Ukraine who will determine the credibility of these elections.

Executive Summary of Findings

1. By all measures, this election represents a step forward in Ukraine's continued democratization. The fact that the outcome of the election is uncertain underlines how far Ukraine's democracy has advanced since its independence.
2. Ukraine's voters were generally able to express their will and exercise their right to vote in a calm and peaceful environment, despite the Kremlin's efforts to portray these elections as illegitimate and not reflective of the will of the people. Aside from

minor non-systemic violations, which did not affect the overall outcome of the election, election day procedures were implemented in accordance with the law.

3. Kremlin aggression has threatened to disenfranchise approximately 16 percent of the Ukrainian electorate. Twelve percent of the Ukrainian electorate resides in occupied regions as a result of the Kremlin's annexation of Crimea and the ongoing war in and occupation of the Donbas region. An additional 1.4 million Ukrainians, or 4 percent of the electorate, have been forced to flee their homes and are now registered as internally displaced persons in Ukraine.
4. Overall, the pre-election period was generally calm and peaceful. Although observer groups and media documented allegations such as vote buying, abuse of administrative resources, and wiretapping by campaign teams, these allegations, if proven, did not affect the outcome of the election.
5. Although incidents related to paramilitary groups, such as National Corps (also known as National *Druzhyny*), received extensive coverage during the campaign period by international and domestic media and observer groups, it does not appear that these groups affected the electoral process.

Political Background

Since Ukraine's last presidential election in May 2014, the country has felt the effects of an ongoing war with Russia and an economic recession. At the same time, the country has made progress towards the European Union by achieving visa-free travel, adopting fiscal decentralization for municipalities, eliminating its dependence on Russian energy, creating anti-corruption agencies, tackling reforms in the healthcare sector, and modernizing its armed forces. In short, the 2019 presidential election was a referendum on incumbent Petro Poroshenko's presidency.

Poroshenko won the previous election in May 2014 by a comfortable margin of 55 to 13 percent over former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, representing the first time in Ukraine's history in which the president was elected in the first round and with one candidate winning a plurality in all regions of the country. Despite the decisive presidential victory, the war and economic recession

reduced Poroshenko's party to second place (22 percent) in the parliamentary elections five months later. Since that time, Poroshenko has seen his approval rating drop as low as single digits, due to allegations of corruption and general public dissatisfaction with the pace of reforms.

A record 44 candidates filed for the presidency, with each candidate required to be 35 years old, a citizen of Ukraine for the last ten years and speak Ukrainian. Ukraine's election laws allocate free air time on television to candidates, and more importantly, candidates have the right to appoint members to election commissions. Several candidates withdrew from the race, leaving 39 candidates on the ballot—another record for Ukraine.

Candidates

This election featured a rematch between Petro Poroshenko and Yulia Tymoshenko—both fixtures of the Ukrainian political scene for the past two decades. However, voters demanding change fueled the rise of Volodymyr Zelenskiy, a popular television star who announced his candidacy on New Year's Eve and led in almost every poll since that time.

All three candidates enjoyed double-digit support during the campaign. While Zelenskiy, Poroshenko and, Tymoshenko were considered the top-tier candidates, other candidates such as Yuri Boyko, Anatoliy Hrytsenko, and Oleh Lyashko received noticeable support—between five and ten percent of voters in the pre-election environment. Hrytsenko, a former Minister of Defense, obtained the endorsements of Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadoviy and two lesser-known candidates in early March. Pro-Russian candidate Yevhen Muraev endorsed Oleksandr Vilkul, and President Poroshenko received a minor candidate endorsement as well. Businessman and former Donetsk Governor Serhiy Taruta announced his withdrawal from the race and his support for Tymoshenko after the deadline, though he remained on the ballot and asked his supporters to vote for Tymoshenko.

While Zelenskiy was the clear front runner during the campaign period, the two candidates facing each other in the runoff were unknown. As results are tabulated and reported, Ukraine's electorate must now look to the runoff election, which will take place on April 21, 2019.

PRE-ELECTION ENVIRONMENT

Campaign Environment

A record number of candidates—44—were officially registered for the 2019 presidential election. All candidates had to pay a registration deposit of 2.5 million *hryvnas* (approximately \$92,000 USD), a high amount for a grassroots candidate. By March 7, the final day to withdraw from the race, five candidates withdrew. One additional candidate withdrew from the election on March 16 to endorse another; however, his name remained on the ballot.

As such, a total of 39 candidates, four of whom are women, were on the ballot for Ukraine's 35 million eligible voters to choose from. Given the record number of candidates, there was speculation that some candidates were "technical candidates," added to the ballot to aid major contenders through use of media time, cooperation with their appointed election commissioners, or to confuse voters. For instance, observers and election analysts noted the back-to-back placement of candidates "Tymoshenko, Yuriy" and "Tymoshenko, Yulia." Other analysts have suggested that some less competitive candidates may have been fielded to increase name recognition and support for political parties ahead of the October parliamentary elections.

Overall, IRI's long-term observers (LTOs) noted that the campaign began relatively calmly outside of Kyiv and appeared to pick up in the latter part of March. Campaign activities and operations were also reportedly centralized, and guidance tended to emanate from Kyiv before trickling down to the regional level. Observers have noted that campaign teams tend to rely predominantly on national media, social media, and billboards to promote their messages; for example, according to the Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU), the majority of campaign funds were spent on media usage across candidate teams, particularly advertising. Moreover, candidate Zelenskiy relied primarily on social media and online campaigning to engage with voters. According to the citizen observer groups OPORA and CVU, candidates Poroshenko, Tymoshenko, Lyashko and Hrytsenko held the highest number of campaign events, while Volodymyr Zelenskiy was more visible on billboards and posters, as well as online. Candidates Yuriy Boyko and Oleksandr Vilkul were active in the east and the southeast. As of early March, domestic observers noted that one-third of candidates had not campaigned at all.

Negative campaigning was a feature of the campaign environment, particularly on social media. Candidate recriminations of large-scale vote buying schemes were also commonplace during the campaign period. Numerous political interlocutors also raised concerns about the perceived politicization of security forces to the advantage of particular candidates in the electoral process.

These tactics were likely used by some candidates to discredit opponents, and in the longer term, the accusations may erode public confidence in the election process.

Reports alleging abuse of administrative resources, at both the national and local level, were also made by candidate teams and domestic observer groups, and IRI's long-term observers received similar allegations. Most accusations, whether substantiated or not, were leveled at the incumbent. Moreover, detailed reports from OPORA suggest that state subsidies to regions increased in the year preceding the election and that indirect campaigning on state funds was relatively commonplace.

Instances of pre-election violence were recorded at rallies and given considerable media attention. One incident that received extensive coverage was a rally in Cherkasy for President Poroshenko, in which members of National Corps (also known as National *Druzhyny*) attempted to break into the rally area close the president. In the ensuing violence, 22 police officers were hospitalized. Destruction of campaign premises and materials were also documented by media, citizen observer groups, and IRI's long-term observers. For instance, in Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk, IRI observers reported the defacement of campaign materials for Opposition Bloc candidate, Vilkul. In addition, just prior to election day, a text message threatening election commission members in Luhansk against a win by Poroshenko was sent with National *Druzhyny* as the indicated sender. It does not appear that these groups significantly affected the campaign period nationwide, though these incidents have been disruptive in certain areas; for example, Poroshenko's campaign claimed that their meetings with voters in Cherkasy continued to be subject to systematic disruptions by demonstrators.

Election Monitors

Ukraine's Central Election Commission registered 139 Ukrainian civil society organizations (93,531 local observers) and 14 international missions as official observers for the March 31 presidential election. While in the aggregate, these observers play an important role monitoring the campaign and voting procedures to help ensure the transparency of the elections, concerns were raised about some of these groups' political affiliations and lack of observation experience. For instance, with minimal barriers to receive accreditation (i.e., the inclusion of election-related matters and observation as part of the organization's mandate), a majority of non-governmental organizations (85 out of 139) successfully registered to observe this presidential election despite not having election observation experience in Ukraine. Regarding the impartiality of these groups, according to OPORA, 13 organizations

contain names of candidates or political parties competing in the election; over 30 are directly connected to presidential candidates; and 55 are affiliated with current members of parliament or other well-known politicians. This lends itself to the possibility that some domestic observer groups were used for politically motivated interference in the election process, which can serve to discredit the role of domestic observer groups among the public in this and future elections.

One group that successfully registered to observe the elections was National *Druzhyny*, an ultranationalist group that publicly declared during the election period that they would resort to violence on Election Day if they felt it was the only way to stop fraudulent activity from taking place, which included possible violence inside polling stations. In response, the CEC adopted decision #494 that calls on the Security Service (SBU) to investigate statements that some registered citizen observer groups (e.g., National *Druzhyny*) threatened violence to prevent electoral violations and allegations that some citizen observers may be affiliated with armed groups sponsored from abroad.

Election Administration

Presidential elections in Ukraine are administered through a three-tiered system comprising the Central Election Commission, 225 District Election Commissions (DECs), and approximately 30,000 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs, or polling stations). However, as was the case in 2014 with the last national elections, fewer DECs were formed due to the impossibility of administering elections in occupied regions. In this 2019 election, the CEC established 199 District Election Commissions (DECs) with a total of 7,355 members. Twenty-six DECs were not formed: 5 in Luhansk and 9 in Donetsk *oblasts*, as well as 12 in Crimea and Sevastopol. According to OPORA, some DECs were delayed in forming due to failures to reach a two-thirds quorum; however, all were established by early March. A total of 29,901 PECs have also been created.

Domestic observer reports and IRI LTOs noted some significant shifts in the composition of DECs, including two leadership positions, after training was completed. Ongoing changes to PEC membership, including leadership positions, after the completion of training were also observed. Experience levels of both DEC and PEC members varied. The ongoing replacement of commission members was noted to be time-consuming for DECs and created difficulties for PECs to carry out their work. In addition, IRI LTOs observed some DEC and PEC facilities to be in order and prepared for their work while others did not have adequate facilities, supplies, or materials, such as ballot boxes in poor condition or lack of printers.

In September 2018, the Ukrainian parliament approved a list of new candidates to serve on the Central Election Commission of Ukraine (CEC). The commission was expanded from 15 members to 17, with each member serving a seven-year term. Two members were previously appointed in April 2014, but the other 14 members are new. The new members represent all parliamentary factions, except for the Opposition Bloc, which has so far declined to appoint a member. Although this new CEC remains largely untested, experts have generally positively assessed their activities to-date.

Ukraine's national registry of voters includes more than 34.5 million eligible voters, and the only requirement for suffrage is to have attained the age of 18 years. Due to the Russian annexation of Crimea and the occupation of seven percent of the territory in the eastern Donbas region, approximately 12 percent of the country's voters are unable to cast ballots. In addition, the war has resulted in an estimated 1.4 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). Participation by Roma voters was also reported to be possibly impeded as some members of the community may not possess valid ID cards or be included in the State Voter Registry (SVR). An unfortunate side effect of the new visa-free regime with the European Union is that many more Ukrainians are now living and working abroad and thus are much less likely to go through the procedures necessary to vote. While embassies and consulates of Ukraine allow Ukrainians abroad to vote on location, only 530,123 registered abroad for this election. Seventy thousand Ukrainians voted in 2014, with the record being 100,000 votes abroad in 2004. This represents less than 2/10th of one percent of the total votes.

Media and Information Space

Ukrainian national media outlets in the aggregate have provided extensive coverage of the candidates and their campaigns, as well as on procedural aspects related to the elections. However, despite there being a plurality of political opinions represented, private media coverage often reflected a bias toward individual candidates and allotted unequal amounts of time to other candidates, despite what is mandated in Ukraine's election law. Although debates were scheduled during the campaign period, candidates rarely appeared in-person. No single televised debate occurred between all major candidates. The lack of balanced and objective reporting has been noted by analysts as being an impediment to voters making informed decisions, though this trend is attributed less to journalists' capabilities and more to the agendas of media owners. Regarding public media, the CEC allocated free airtime to all presidential candidates beginning on March 1.

Concerns have been expressed about the affiliation between presidential candidate Volodymyr Zelenskiy and the 1+1 national television channel, which is owned by oligarch Igor Kolomoisky. For example, on March 30, the so-called "day of silence" before the election which by law is required to be free from political adverts, the channel aired programs all day featuring Zelenskiy. When addressing inquiries on the matter, 1+1 responded that Zelenskiy acts in these shows as an actor, not a politician.

Online media outlets appeared more vulnerable to fake news and disinformation, whether emanating from the Russian Federation or domestically. Specifically, analysts cited examples of Ukrainian private television channels adopting Kremlin narratives, such as referring to Russian proxy forces in the Donbas region as merely "fighters" or not referring to the Russian Federation as an aggressor state or invader.

Kremlin Malign Interference in Ukraine's Election

Russia has interfered in every election since Ukraine's independence by supporting pro-Kremlin candidates, propagating fake and misleading news, and more recently through cyberattacks that threaten the integrity of the election process's critical infrastructure. This presidential election was no different. There were many reports of Kremlin-backed disinformation and fake news in the pre-election environment. The risk of cyberattacks, which Ukraine is better prepared for now than in 2014, is high in these elections, whether on CEC infrastructure, the State Voter Registry, or exit polling.

In this election—like in 2014—no openly pro-Kremlin candidate had a viable chance of winning. Although Yuri Boyko, a candidate who wants to restore relations with Russia, visited Moscow to meet with Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev 10 days before the election, he and Oleksandr Vilkul profess allegiance to the Ukrainian state and have so far been selective in their words about the aggressor nation.

Cyber Threats

Incumbent Poroshenko frequently spoke about the influence of Russia in this election. For instance, reports indicate that attempted Russian cyberattacks against the Central Election Commission (CEC) took place in the run-up to the election, along with registered distributed denial-of-service attacks and phishing attempts by Kremlin or Kremlin-affiliated hackers seeking to gain access to

Ukrainian government computers and other state structures. Concerns persisted in the pre-election environment regarding the possibility of election-related cyberattacks to Ukraine's CEC and other election administration bodies, power grids, airports, and other critical infrastructure. Since 2014, Ukrainian authorities have procured cutting-edge cybersecurity equipment and software to mitigate these threats, while also engaging in a series of cybersecurity drills in the run-up to the election. Experts ran through simulations attempting to shut down various hacking attempts staged by Western partners in an effort to improve reaction times and responses to Kremlin interference on Election Day. CEC precautions in the pre-election environment were far-reaching and went into great detail, such as not accepting emails from observer groups, but instead requiring them to submit accreditation documents by hard copy. Despite these measures to improve cybersecurity and the integrity of databases, concerns remain as results are tabulated and finalized after polls close—which falls beyond the timeline of this preliminary statement.

Disinformation and Fake News

To limit the effects of Kremlin-backed disinformation and fake news in its political discourse, in 2017 Ukrainian authorities implemented and currently maintain a controversial ban on Russian media and websites, including the once-popular social media sites of *VKontakte* and *Odnoklassniki*, as well as news agencies such as *Sputnik* and *Rossiya Segodnya* (Russia Today). Of the 23.5 percent of Ukrainians who self-report using social media as their primary source of information, 74 percent now use Facebook and 33.5 percent now use Instagram; through the use of virtual personal networks (VPNs) and other means, Russian social media sites are still used, but much less frequently (i.e., 15 percent use *VKontakte* and 10 percent use *Odnoklassniki*).

While Ukrainians now report using primarily non-Russian social media websites, concerns persisted in the pre-election period over advertisements on outlets such as Facebook and Instagram emanating from foreign or undisclosed sources. Foreign ads were banned in January 2019, as were ads from annexed Crimea and occupied areas of Donbas, despite being legally Ukrainian territory. Reports also suggest that an estimated 2,000 Kremlin-affiliated accounts were blocked by Facebook throughout the pre-election environment—some at the request of Ukrainian security services. Thirteen days before the election, on March 18, Facebook announced that it would also require sponsors of political ads in Ukraine to publicly disclose their identity—though many analysts questioned whether this was too little too late. It remains unclear what effect, if any, Kremlin-affiliated disinformation had on the pre-election environment.

Russian Election Observers and Polling Stations

During this election, in addition to mitigating against cyberthreats and disinformation, Ukraine has also sought to limit Russian involvement in its entirety; for example, a law that bans election observers who hold the citizenship of the 'aggressor state' was signed by President Poroshenko on February 26 and is now in force.

In addition, citing security reasons and possible infiltration by Russian intelligence services (FSB) at polling stations, the Central Election Commission approved a recommendation by Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pavlo Klimkin, to close all five polling stations located in the Russian Federation, relocating them to the Ukrainian embassies in Georgia, Finland, and Kazakhstan. This decision affected an estimated three million Ukrainians who live and work in the Russian Federation.

Ukraine's Ongoing War with Russia

Ukraine is unable to administer elections in the entirety of its territory due to the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation as well as ongoing hostilities in the eastern regions of the Donbas. In both locations, illegal armed groups supported by the Kremlin maintain *de facto* control of parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. These violations of Ukraine's territorial integrity have effectively disenfranchised approximately 12 percent of the country's electorate, around six million voters, and displaced an additional 1.4 million, or 4 percent. Ukrainian authorities established procedures to allow residents of occupied regions and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to more easily vote, which allows voters to register a temporary voting address at least five days before the election. This registration is only valid for the specific election in question and requires renewal; nevertheless, it represents a concerted effort by Ukrainian authorities to allow these voters to participate. For those residing in occupied territories, this procedure necessitates voters exit, return, then re-exit their communities to participate in the elections—which requires significant time and resources, and may present a personal risk associated with crossing government checkpoints.

According to reports from IRI's long-term observers and other monitoring groups, Ukrainian authorities, including the CEC and Ministry of Justice, as well as civil society organizations, attempted to disseminate voter education materials. Leaflets were also distributed at checkpoints and in IDP settlements since December. The effect of these efforts was limited. Survey research in the pre-election environment from the International Organization for Migration indicates that, of IDPs who did not intend to vote, 37

percent believe they did not have the right and 12 percent reported not knowing how. Moreover, as of March 25, the last day when voters could change their place of voting, 265,476 voters had temporarily changed their place of voting, of whom only 74,995 (28 percent) are permanently registered in the occupied territories: 4,991 in Crimea, and 56,762 and 26,055 in Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts*, respectively.

While experts have positively evaluated authorities' work with the registry of voters, this issue of registering Ukrainian citizens within the country can be further simplified and remains a challenge, as it affects not only IDPs but also university students and those who have changed locations for employment and other reasons.

ELECTION DAY OBSERVATIONS

Participation

Overall, voter participation in the polling stations observed by the IRI mission was high. The Election Day environment was observed to be calm despite some crowding late-morning and early afternoon. Observers noted that citizens were enthusiastic, and overall people were in good spirits while going to the polls. Aside from the presence of one candidate observed outside a PEC, no violations of campaign silence were observed.

Set-Up and Opening Procedures

Approximately half of the polling stations delayed opening procedures by up to fifteen minutes, primarily due to the late arrival of election commissioners, but all PECs observed opened on time to voters at 8:00 AM. All twelve polling stations observed by IRI for the opening received all necessary materials in advance.

Voting

For the most part, voting was calm and polling officials performed their duties according to procedure. Although polling stations of more than 50 registered voters could have up to 39 and no less than nine election commissioners, the average number in PECs visited by IRI observers was 16, and women comprised the majority of members, including leadership positions. Party observers,

domestic observers, and international observers were all seen to be present at polling stations. Given the number of election commissioners and observers, a few polling stations, especially in smaller venues, appeared crowded but this did not seem to affect the voting process. No violence was observed on Election Day.

IRI observers noted some instances in which commissioners were unable to name the candidate they were representing in the PEC—a confirmation of the confusion a high number of technical candidates can cause in the election administration process.

Accessibility of polling stations remains an issue in Ukraine. A majority were observed to be well lit, but only a minority of polling stations were observed to have a ramp or lift to increase accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Closing Procedures

Closing procedures were observed to be quiet, calm, and without the presence of campaigning. They were largely conducted in accordance with the law. All PECs observed for closing and counting procedures had enough PEC members present to meet quorum requirements and had all necessary materials. In the majority of PECs observed, counting procedures were followed in accordance with the law, and no complaints were filed where IRI observed the closing and counting.

Electoral Violations

While the following did not affect the outcome of the election, these irregularities were observed in one or more instances: polling station information lists were not visible; less than the required number of ballot boxes were present due to a broken box; voting booths were not in locations that ensured the secrecy of the vote; unused ballots were not counted; and seal numbers were not read or registered.

IRI observers noted a few instances of unauthorized persons entering polling stations on Election Day. For instance, at a polling station in Kherson *oblast*, an accredited observer from National *Druzhyny* seemed to interfere with the voting process by standing in close proximity to and communicating with voters in booths with open curtains.

Recommendations

To support the furtherance of Ukraine's democratic development, on the basis of these pre-election and election-day observations, the IRI mission respectfully urges Ukrainians to address immediate and longer-term challenges to inclusive and credible elections.

Short-term Recommendations

In preparation for the second round of voting, currently scheduled for April 21, IRI offers the following short-term recommendations to further strengthen the credibility of the process:

- Recommendation 1: Registration Management Bodies (RMB) should ensure adequate staffing to efficiently accommodate temporary residence registrations of voters for the second round.
- Recommendation 2: The two candidates who advance to the second round on April 21 should appear together in a moderated televised debate prior to Election Day in order to allow voters to make well-informed decisions when casting their vote.

Medium- to Long-term Recommendations

The IRI mission also offers recommendations to strengthen the electoral process in the medium- to long-term:

- Recommendation 1: All electoral actors should take greater measures to increase the inclusivity of the electoral process for marginalized groups, such as internally displaced persons and Roma.
- Recommendation 2: While voting procedures for IDPs were simplified for the 2019 presidential elections, the current process precludes them from taking part in the elections of single-mandate candidates in parliamentary elections. This deficiency in the law should be addressed prior to the October 2019 parliamentary elections and 2020 local elections.
- Recommendation 3: Currently, the only requirement for organizations seeking to register to observe elections in Ukraine is that they must include elections and election observation as an area of activity in their charters. To protect the role of domestic observe groups in Ukrainian electoral processes, the current Law on the Election of the President of Ukraine and the draft

Electoral Code of Ukraine should be amended to require that observers agree to certain basic standards, such as the international election observation standards.

- Recommendation 4: Further clarification of campaign activities and materials should be more clearly defined to address efforts to circumvent both the written law and the spirit of the law on campaign silence prior to Election Day.
- Recommendation 5: Campaigns and parties should focus their campaign messaging more on issues rather than negative campaigning and attack ads targeting opponents, as such campaigning undermines the credibility and confidence of the electoral process in the eyes of the Ukrainian public.
- Recommendation 6: To promote issue-based campaigns and support an informed electorate, candidates should participate in-person in televised debates against opponents during the campaign period.
- Recommendation 7: The Central Election Commission should consider a more user-friendly ballot design, which would allow voters to more easily locate their preferred candidates and fold the ballots after making their selection.

About the Mission

IRI announced the arrival of the international election observation delegation to observe Ukraine's presidential election on March 26. Cindy McCain, Chair of the Board of Trustees for the McCain Institute for International Leadership and Dr. Daniel Twining, President of IRI, led the delegation. The delegation consists of 30 observers from eight countries including current members of parliament, former U.S. Congressmen, and senior IRI leadership. IRI will deploy another delegation to observe the April 21 run-off election.

About IRI

IRI has worked in Ukraine since 1994 and has observed 12 elections in-country, including the 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2007, 2012 and 2014 parliamentary elections and the 1999, 2004, 2010, 2012 and 2014 presidential elections. IRI has helped to develop effective, citizen-responsive government, trained tens of thousands of political party members and civil society activists, and supported

the participation of underrepresented groups such as women and youth in the political process. IRI has been recognized for its international survey research through its regular public opinion surveys which includes dozens of national, municipal and oblast-level surveys of the political and public policy landscape in Ukraine.

Tagged: Eurasia,Ukraine,Strengthening Electoral Processes