THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION & MARCH 1ST TRAGEDY

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Category: Opinions

Reactions of Armenian Communities in North America
The Presidential Election & March 1st Tragedy

(A Powerpoint Presentation by D. Abrahamian BA, MD)

Montréal, June 20 2008

The Presentations of the participants may be viewed on YouTube

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Human Rights Watch 2008 Annual Report

The report summarizes the human rights situation in more than 75 countries.

The established democracies are accepting flawed and unfair elections for political expediency …by allowing autocrats to pose as democrats, without demanding they uphold the civil and political rights that make democracy meaningful, the United States, the European Union and other influential democracies risk undermining human rights worldwide (…)

Human Rights Watch has documented a number of elections manipulated through: outright fraud, control of electoral machinery, blocking or discouraging opposition candidates, political violence, stifling the media and civil society, and undermining the rule of law

Many of these tactics are illegal under domestic and international law, but rarely do outside powers call governments to account for it. Established democracies are often unwilling to do so for fear of losing access to resources or commercial opportunities, or because of the perceived requirements of fighting terrorism.

Armenia 2007 (Human Rights Watch Report)

Although the elections showed improvements over previous years, observers have documented irregularities and the opposition contested results in some locations. Harassment of opposition supporters and limits on media freedom were documented. Torture and ill-treatment remain a problem. Limits on media freedom persist.

Elections

International observers have determined that the May 12 parliamentary elections largely met international standards, although they have noted pre-election irregularities, including pressure on employees to vote for the establishment candidates, distribution of goods and services in exchange for votes, and abuse of administrative resources.
Opposition parties held rallies without police harassment and had access to public television, although pro-government parties

received disproportionate coverage. On election day there were reports of fraud and double voting as well as problems in transparency, counting, tabulation, and publication of results.

Arrests with Possible Political Motivation ;
Torture and Ill-Treatment;
Limitation of Media Freedom and Freedom of Speech

Joint Statement On Recent Evernts In Armenia

Joint statement by AAA, AGBU, ANCA, the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America and the Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America.

As leading Armenian American organizations, we stand in solidarity with the state and the people of Armenia as the nation confronts the current political crisis.

We are ***deeply saddened by the violence, divisiveness, and deaths*** during the post-electoral street unrest in the capital and extend our heartfelt sympathies to all the families of the victims. We condemn all violent acts, including assaults, vandalism, and looting, and expect, consistent with due process of law, that the organizers and perpetrators will be brought to justice.

We ***urge all parties to work peacefully within Armenia's civic and legal structures*** to address their outstanding differences and restore Armenia's political environment to a state of normalcy in as timely and responsible a manner as possible. We join with all Armenians in reaffirming our people's common commitment to the security of Armenia and Artsakh in a challenging and often dangerous region, and to cooperate toward our shared aim of strengthening an open and democratic Armenian homeland, based upon the rule of law, social and economic justice, freedom of expression and the media, and equal opportunity for all.

As Armenian Americans, proud and vital partners in the future of the Armenian nation, we are ***ready to cooperate with the newly-elected President and the government*.** We remain committed to doing our part to serve our homeland and the Armenian Nation as we have done throughout our long history. Armenia will continue to inspire and sustain generations of Armenians who have lived, as we do today, beyond her borders.

An Open Letter to Armenian Americans (Armenian Council of America)

We read with interest the joint statement of the Armenian Assembly of America, The Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Armenian National Committee of America, the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern/Western) and the Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America (Eastern/Western) regarding the recent events in Armenia.

We join them in expressing our heartfelt sympathies to all families of the victims, condemn all violent acts and expect that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

We reaffirm our commitment to strive "toward our shared aim of strengthening an open and democratic Armenian homeland, based upon the rule of law, social and economic justice, freedom of expression and the media, and equal opportunity for all".

However, it is difficult for us to understand how these noble principles could be justly served with simultaneously "cooperating with the newly-elected President and the government", when we are all well aware that the latter have trampled and disgraced those same principles for the past at least ten years.

What kind of "rule of law" can we expect from these authorities, who have committed many constitutional infractions, falsified presidential and parliamentary elections, conducted farcical legal proceedings of the Oct. 27 case, and falsified the constitutional plebiscite, to name just a few examples?

What kind of "social and economic justice" can we expect from these authorities who have created a class of oligarchs by usurping the rights of their citizens, monopolized the economy of the country and given away objects of strategic importance to foreign powers?

What kind of "freedom of expression and the media" can we expect from these authorities, who have banned independent TV stations from the airwaves, established a public TV reminiscent of totalitarian regimes and banned public protests?

What kind of "equal opportunity for all" can we expect from these authorities, whose actions have polarized the populace, exploited the resources of the country and the people and hence created deep mistrust between the latter and themselves?

An Armenia where the authorities capriciously infract the law, trample justice, and usurp the rights and freedom of its population can NOT be an inspiration neither to its citizens nor to Armenians worldwide. These kind of authorities are a disgrace to Armenia and Armenians worldwide and hence do NOT deserve our support. Rather than cooperating with them, we should hold them accountable to their misdeeds, because it is not only the future of Armenia that is at stake, but the future of Armenians worldwide.

The Canadian Letters(I): Letter to FM

- Denial of voting to Armenian expatriates

The Canadian Letters(II): Letter to his Excellency the President Elect

- 1) Participation of all concerned

2) Release of Political Prisoners

- 3) Establishment of Freedom of Speech and Political Liberties

The Divide

- 1956
- 1996
- 2008
- His Excellency Serzh Sargsyan, “Destroy the wall”