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# Democracy In Azerbaijan Surrenders Oil Pressure

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PanARMENIAN.Net - 16/10/2008

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In the held Presidential Elections of Azerbaijan the six opponents of Aliyev were just an accompaniment necessary for the normal course of elections.

Azerbaijani Presidential Elections that were quite correctly described by western media as a referendum ended successfully. Ilham Aliyev got 90% of votes; his opponents acknowledged defeat and even congratulated the re-elected president. All this happened in spite of the fact that Ilham Aliyev first came to power in 2003 following an off-standard "democratic" election, which, nevertheless, legalized the advent of the family dynasty, whose forefather was Heydar Aliyev, Soviet leader that was able to keep afloat after the USSR breakdown. In fact, the Azerbaijani people had no other choice.

/PanARMENIAN.Net/ For absence of necessity let us leave out the reports and assessments of international observers on "fair and democratic elections in stable Azerbaijan". In fact, the international community recognized the domination of oil over democracy, putting as a foundation-stone, as usual, the right of the strongest and the richest. In the held elections the six opponents of Aliyev were just an accompaniment necessary for the normal course of elections. At the time of the Presidential Elections of Armenia our country could offer nothing of this sort; that was why the elections had the results they had. However, this is not what we are going to discuss. The only problem of the Azerbaijani authorities was the delivery of voters to the polling stations, a task they managed successfully. There was no election rush and everything proceeded steadily, properly, and quite characteristic of Europe. However, they were especially the European observers that "did not notice" the electoral boycott imposed by opposition parties. It turns out that no opposition exists in Azerbaijan. Most probably, it is indeed so. With totalitarianism in the country, opposition is at best allowed to hold one minor piquet, after which no one can even think of opposing the authorities.

As a number of media sources inform, the Azerbaijani opposition that boycotted the elections observed serious cases of law violation during the voting process of the Presidential Elections. The Center for Cooperation of Opposition (CCO), whose representatives watched the election process in different regions of the country, has this fact mentioned in its latest statement. The Center includes the Popular Front Party of Azerbaijan, the "Musavat" party, the Civil Development Party, the Liberal Party, and the Public Forum "In the name of Azerbaijan", who had all boycotted the elections.

As the CCO statement says, in some of the polling stations ballot-papers were not counted at the presence of observers before the voting began. In a number of cases ballot-papers were provided without an ID card. The openings of some ballot boxes did not meet international norms, which allowed several ballots to be dropped at a time. At the polling stations of the Divichinskiy and Surakhanskiy districts the method of "carousel" was used, i.e. one and the same person voted several times in different polling stations. The method was actively applied after midday so that by 3:00 p.m. they would be able to report 50% of participation in the elections, the CCO observers believe. According to official data 53% of voters had taken part in the elections by 3:00 p.m. In majority of regions autobuses and taxis carried voters to polling stations under the control of executive structures. The malls "Sharg" and "Bollug" were closed and the sellers were made to go voting. A similar

case could also be observed in the local fair ad in other shopping centers of Ganja.

"At the time of Heydar Aliyev the Azerbaijani budget was about USD 1 billion against today's USD 10 billion, but all the petrodollars are now spent on satisfying the appetite of the Aliyev family and on projects that give the impression of economic development. Ten years ago TV channels regularly invited opposition representatives to interviews, whereas today they never do it. There were several serious oppositional publications ten years ago, while we have only a couple of them left today. Ten years ago attack on a journalist was considered a serious offense, while journalists are imprisoned for their articles today. Journalists have been killed, arrested and assaulted recently," says Ex-Speaker of Parliament Isa Gambar, who was a Presidential candidate in 2003 and, according to official data, got 12% of votes.

For the past years the number of influential economic groups has decreased, whereas corruption has gained force in Azerbaijan. In the Transparency International rating Azerbaijan has the 158th standing, falling behind of its neighbours Georgia (67th standing) and Armenia (109th standing). Every day the Azeri media "boasts" such headlines as "Hanged Himself", "Slaughtered", "Committed Suicide", not to mention hundreds of cases of trafficking and narcobusiness.

The flattered Azerbaijani economy almost fully depends on crude oil, which formed 97 per cent of national export for the first half of the current year. Distribution of oil resources is out of the question; everything sinks in the Aliyev clan. Any kind of democratic reforms are unfeasible in Azerbaijan.

Be that as it may, Azerbaijan is condemned to govern the clan for another 5 years and then... Then anyone else from the clan may become the President of Azerbaijan, for instance Mehriban, the wife of Ilham Aliyev or Aliyev's son Heydar II. However, all this is possible in one case only - if ten years later Azerbaijani oil resources do not expire.

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