

Kyrgyzstan parliamentary elections of 28 November 2021: UK statement

Mr Chair, I would like to thank the delegation of Kyrgyzstan for raising this issue and congratulate the Kyrgyz government on their latest democratic step.

I would also like to thank the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) for another comprehensive account of an elections process that will help States across the OSCE region identify how they can improve their adherence to OSCE commitments.

The [preliminary assessment from ODIHR's monitoring mission](#) that the elections were peaceful and competitive, with a wide range of political options to choose from, is encouraging.

However, I note the concerns that the overall legal framework places limitations on civil and political rights and diminishes separation of powers and independence of the judiciary. ODIHR's report tells us that strict enforcement of some legislation led to candidates campaigning with caution. This caution does the Kyrgyz electorate a disservice, as the plurality that the election demonstrated was not meaningfully translated into an engaged and vibrant political landscape.

On media freedom, ODIHR's report tells us that some media outlets were reticent to cover activities of contestants, instead focusing on the regular activities of the president and authorities. The report also notes the absence of critical and analytical reporting during the official campaign, thereby limiting the voters' ability to make an informed choice. The UK encourages the Government of Kyrgyzstan to continue to support Kyrgyzstan's vibrant free media, including by taking account of this week's statement from the OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media. We welcome the work of the Programme Office in Bishkek on the safety of journalists and protection of media outlets, and the work the Office has also done to support civil society organisations more broadly in Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyzstan remains a positive example in the region for media freedom, civil society and competitive elections. The UK wishes Kyrgyzstan's new and returning MPs success as they deliver for the Kyrgyz people and stands ready to support the government in meeting its OSCE obligations.

Thank you.