

UK statement on elections in Azerbaijan

The United Kingdom notes the Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions of the International Election Observation Mission, which observed early Parliamentary Elections in Azerbaijan on 9 February.

The UK welcomes the engagement by the authorities of Azerbaijan and other interlocutors with the observation mission. We note that the Central Election Commission made concerted efforts to act transparently and to welcome the international observers.

Despite a high number of candidates, and an inclusive candidate registration process, the International Election Observation Mission reported a lack of meaningful choice due to a lack of real political discussion. We also note that only 21 percent of the candidates who contested the elections were women.

As the Statement of Preliminary Findings reports, a number of long-standing recommendations on election-related legislation by ODIHR and the Council of Europe Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) have yet to be addressed. We also note that a number of rulings of the European Court of Human Rights on the right to free elections have not been executed. Some of which prevented candidates from running.

In addition, the International Election Observation Mission reported significant procedural violations during the counting and tabulation of the vote on election day.

We look forward to receiving the Final Report of the International Election Observation Mission and encourage the authorities of Azerbaijan to take advantage of the expertise within ODIHR to assist them in implementing the recommendations. The UK stands ready to support the Azerbaijan authorities on electoral reforms and improvements to the democratic process.