

## **OPINION**

of Ramiz Ibrahimov, member of Expert Group under CEC to investigate the complaints against actions (inactions) and decisions violating citizens' election rights in the Municipal Elections on December 23, 2014

on the appeal 09 submitted to CEC on November 24, 2014

Baku

25 November 2014

Having investigated the appeal # 09 submitted to CEC on November 24, 2014 by Vugar Namig Mammadov, nominee on Mamusta municipality of Lankaran-Astara Con.EC # 76 on his own initiative in the Municipal elections on December 23, 2014 regarding the annul of the Con.EC decision on the refusal from registering his candidacy and adoption of a relevant decision on the registration of his candidacy, as a member of Expert Group, I have determined that:

Since the appeal had been submitted in comply with Articles 112 and 112-1 of the Election Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Instruction "On the rules for submission and processing of appeals and complaints on the violation of election rights to the Central Election Commission and Constituency Election Commissions of the Republic of Azerbaijan" approved by the CEC decision # 11/53-2 dated August 12, 2008 (amended by decisions # 15/58-6 dated July 23, 2010 and # 5/16 dated October 19, 2012), it was accepted for implementation and relevant investigation was held on this.

By justifying his complaint, citizen V.N.Mammadov informed that he had nominated his candidacy on his own initiative on Mamusta municipality of Lankaran-Astara Con.EC # 76 in Municipal elections on December 23, 2014, submitted signature sheets and other necessary documents attached to them to the Con.EC upon the collection of voters' signatures within that municipality, but his candidacy was refused from registration by the Con.EC decision # 11/30-3, dated November 20, 2014 without any reason. So, 23 out of 50 voters' signatures were considered invalid.

By justifying its decision on the refusal from registering the candidacy of V.N.Mammadov, the Con.EC informed that 23 invalid and 27 valid out of 50 signatures had been included in the submitted signature sheet according to an opinion provided by an expert of the Working Group to examine signature sheets and the attached documents. Therefore, the number of valid signatures included in the signature sheet was not sufficient for the candidate's registration.

During the investigation process the documents which have led to the adoption of the argued decision by the Con.EC and submitted for the candidate registration were requested to be sent by the Con.EC to the Working Group under CEC for opinion providing upon the conduct of relevant investigation.

The applicant was informed by me on the investigation, also noted on his right of presenting additional evidences and documents on the complaint and invited to take part in the investigation. He informed that he supported his appeal, voters' signatures included in the signature sheet had been collected by himself and the opinion provided

by an expert on consideration of signatures invalid was without any reason. Therefore, he requested to annul the Con.EC decision on the refusal from registering the candidacy and to register his candidacy on that municipality.

The opinions and protocol dated November 24, 2014, compiled as a result of examining the documents necessary for the candidate registration by the Working Group revealed that voters' signatures included in the signature sheet submitted for the registration of Vugar Namig Mammadov had been collected in comply with the Election Code. 50 voters' signatures collected by the nominee were considered valid. Pursuant to Article 215.1.5 of the Election Code, every nominated citizen shall collect 30 valid voters' signatures to be registered to the municipality membership within a territory with more than 4.999 and less than 9.999 population number. It is justified by a reference of the relevant executive authority that the population number within the territory covered by Mamusta municipality is within the limits as defined by the above-mentioned Article of the Election Code. Since the number of the valid signatures was sufficient for the registration of the candidacy on that municipality and other documents on the candidate had been compiled in accordance with the Election Code, legal grounds were found to register his candidacy.

Pursuant to Article 57.4 of the Election Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan, a voter shall include their surname, name, patronymic, date of birth, address of residence, serial number of ID card or its substitute document, date of issue and date of signature while signing the signature sheet. The information necessary for inclusion on the signing voters could be entered the signature sheet by the person collecting signatures. The indicated information shall be handwriting and guaranteed to not be disseminated.

Pursuant to Article 59 of the Election Code, if the same person is found out to have signed several times while checking the signatures, then only one signature shall be considered valid and others invalid. Therewith, the signatures of voters without election right and inaccurate information according to the opinion provided by an expert involved in the activity of the election commission, voters' signatures included in signature sheets until sending a notification on candidate nomination to the relevant election commission, signatures considered invalid due the violation of Article 57.1 of the Election Code, signatures put by one person or different persons on behalf of one person and signatures put in pencil and not in handwriting shall be considered invalid.

Article 60.2 of the Election Code defines the grounds for the refusal from registering the candidacy. While adopting a decision on the refusal from registering the complainer's candidacy, the Con.EC had not taken into consideration the requirements of that article.

So, through a full, comprehensive, fair and impartial investigation not any legal ground was found to annul the argued decision of the Con.EC and to implement the complaint.

According to the above-mentioned, the complaint shall be implemented due to its grounded factors, the decision # 11/30-3 of Lankaran-Astara Con.EC # 76, dated November 20, 2014 on the refusal from registering the candidacy of V.N.Mammadov on Mamusta municipality shall be annulled and his candidacy to the municipality membership on that election constituency shall be registered.

Pursuant to Articles 59, 60, 112, 112-1, 215.1.5, 216.1 of the Election Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan and items # 1-7 of "On the rules for submission and processing

of appeals and complaints on the violation of election rights to the Central Election Commission and Constituency Election Commissions of the Republic of Azerbaijan”, I **have determined:**

1. The complaint # 09, dated November 24, 2014 by Vugar Namig Mammadov, nominated on Mamusta municipality of Lankaran-Astara Con.EC # 76 on his own initiative shall be implemented and the Con.EC decision # 11/30-3 dated November 20, 2014 on the refusal from registering his candidacy shall be annulled.
2. The candidacy of Vugar Namig Mammadov, nominated on Mamusta municipality of Lankaran-Astara Con.EC # 76 on his own initiative shall be registered to municipality membership.
3. The opinion shall be published no later than 18 hours upon its adoption (shall be posted on the website) and its copy shall be sent to the applicant.

Expert Group member

Ramiz Ibrahimov