



Canadian Election Observer Missions in Ukraine

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Overview

- Ukraine is clearly at a cross-roads between authoritarianism and democracy
 - Free elections ensure that Ukrainians can chose their own destiny
- Canada is both a friend to Ukraine and has the expertise to carry out election observer missions in Ukraine



Historical Context

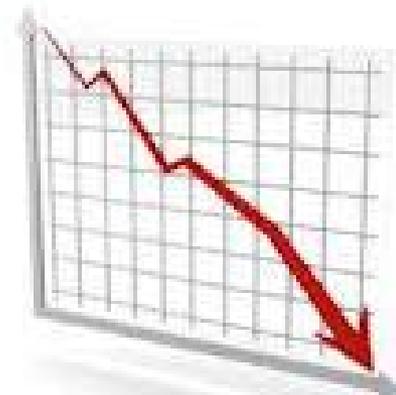
- After 300 years of colonial rule, Ukraine declared independence in 1991.
- Over the last 20 years Ukraine has made significant gains in developing its civil society, including improving its democratic processes.

- With respect to the question of civil society, we need to ask :
 - Does Ukraine integrate into the European family of nations that have democratic traditions ? or
 - Does Ukraine slide back into the sphere of Russian authoritarian influence ?

Ukraine is sliding backwards

- In spite of many successes over the last few years, Ukraine is regressing :
 - **Political pressure** on opposition members, independent media, and journalists
 - **Constitutional manipulation** (in forming the government)
 - **SBU** (internal security service) **harassment** of NGOs, universities, and businesses,...
 - Ukraine is clearly falling back into dictatorship. According to Freedom House:

Ukraine is not headed in the right direction under the current government when it comes to democracy and human rights...Both forces inside Ukraine and countries in the West have a responsibility to engage and push aggressively against further backsliding.



Canada's "Special Relationship" with Ukraine

- **Canada has a "Special Relationship" with Ukraine,** which is built on the :
 - Significant contribution that 4 waves of immigrants have made to building Canada
 - Important contribution that 1.2 million Canadians of Ukrainian ancestry make to this country every day, and
 - Tens of thousands of personal ties between the peoples of Canada and Ukraine
- **Canada stands at the forefront amongst Ukraine's friends,** by demonstrating its leadership by taking a number of important steps, for example :
 - Being the first Western nation to recognize Ukraine's independence
 - Supporting democratic development in Ukraine for over 20 years



Previous Election Observer Missions

- Close to 2,000 Canadians* have volunteered their time as election observers in support of Ukraine's road to democracy, giving Canada much experience.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Election</u>	<u>Mission Leadership</u>	<u>No. of Observers</u>
1	Oct. 2004	Presidential Round 1	UCC - CUF	60
2	Nov. 2004	Presidential Round 2	UCC - CUF	70
3	Dec. 2004	Presidential Round 3	Canada **	500
4	Dec. 2004	Presidential Round 3	UCC - CUF	500
5	Mar. 2006	Parliamentary	UCC - CUF	150
6	Sep. 2007	Parliamentary	UCC - CUF	125
7	2010	Presidential Round s1 & 2	UCC-CUF	128
8	2010	Presidential Rounds 1 & 2	Canada **	200

* Total number of observers includes Canadian OSCE observers (however, details are not listed in above chart)

** Canadian Independent Observer Missions

Successes to-date

- Provided **key evidence** for annulling fraudulent Second Round Presidential elections in November 2004.
- **1,000 Canadians** were part of a 12,000 contingent of international observers that helped ensure a free and fair Second Round Re-run Presidential elections in December 2004.
- Subsequent election monitors helped **ensure massive blatant fraud was averted.**

Canadian Observers ...

- Canadian observers are often amongst the best observers in Ukraine. There are several reasons :
 1. Superior training
 2. Strong leadership
 3. Many know the country and have native language skills
 4. Meet with local officials to get the full story
 5. Many have extraordinary commitment, including :
 - Arriving earlier to learn their districts
 - Remaining longer in the field to ensure they receive final counts
 - Staying all night at their polls to ensure fair vote counts

Domestic observers

- It is essential that Ukrainian NGOs and parties have local observers in all 33,000 polling stations across Ukraine.
 - This ensures less opportunity for fraud
 - Provides a basis for International Observers to be more effective

Note :

- International observers are exponentially more effective when there are strong domestic observers present.
- However, many local party observers are NOT true members of parties, only last minute paid employees that can be easily bribed or “convinced” to support an outcome at any given poll.
- It is best when local observers are from outside the polling station boundaries so that they are less easily bribed or “convinced”.

Feedback from Previous Observer Missions

- Canadian election observers have provided valuable support to local NGO election observers, party observers, and even to election workers trying to simply perform their best as per the law. Commentary most often received includes :

“Thank you for not forgetting about our little village. No one has ever come here. I have no one I can speak to about what is going on.”

“I’m glad you showed up because I am outnumbered by all these people who are paid for.”

“At least I feel I have someone I can call for help or advice.”

International Observers have two key Purposes :

1. Presence of observers deters election fraud
2. Monitor elections in support of calling an election “free and fair” or as “fraudulent”

Ultimately one wants ensure that the will of the voters of Ukraine is expressed freely in the final result of any election.

Opportunity for Canada once again

- There is a real opportunity for Canada to demonstrate **global leadership** amongst Western nations in this region.

New Election Law in Ukraine - Skewed

Most of the significant changes have a negative impact, as they continue to favour corruption, manipulation, and the use of Administrative resources by a ruling class of oligarchs.

Direction of Impact	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Candidates not excluded for tech violations• Parties may replace their representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Registered NGOs may have observers
	Neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guarantees equal access to media, but the media is controlled	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voters list changes via court decision only, but courts are easily bought• Mixed system. 225 district / 225 party list
	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Candidates both in districts and party lists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Party threshold incr. from 3% to 5%• No electoral blocs permitted• Disproportionate punishment for media• No expense reports required• No donor list reports required
		Minor	Major
		Size of Impact	

It might seem complex, but don't worry...

- The current election law is undergoing a challenge in the constitutional court and is widely expected to be further amended in favour of the ruling class.

Pending riding boundary changes

- Riding boundaries are again being changed :
 1. Riding boundaries are being geographically skewed to favour individual oligarchs.
 2. Size of ridings is being played with to favour the ruling class of oligarchs.

Pre-election day problems

- Additional problems will undoubtedly materialize in the some following areas :
 - Privileged access to mass media
 - Use of administrative resources
 - Vote buying
 - Buying electoral commission members
 - Intimidation of local electoral commission members
 - Use of legal structures to exert pressure

- Therefore, **long-term observers** are required, as manipulation of elections begins long before election day.

Ukraine's Request for Election Observers

- Ukrainian Foreign Minister Kostiantyn Hryshchenko has said that :
 - First, Ukraine will invite international observers and provide them with the necessary assistance.
 - Second, Ukraine wants the proper use of electoral legislation. We welcome the expert and technical assistance for the preparation of electoral commissions. ¹

Prime Minister's support for election observation in Ukraine

- On October 26, 2010, speaking at Catholic University in Lviv Ukraine, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said :

The cornerstone of Canada's foreign policy is the promotion of such values: freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and all the institutions that come with them...

*...**remember that in Canada, you have friends**. Friends who respect and admire Ukraine's heart for freedom, its spirit of national self-determination, and the courage of its people, a courage that has never deserted you, even in the darkest nights of your long history...*

*...**Canadians are happy to assist with elections** because it is in the choosing of the government by the governed that freedom becomes more than just a word...*

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Canada's Challenge

- Canada should send 250 - 350 international election observers to monitor Ukraine's Parliamentary elections in October 2012.



Canada's meaningful impact in the Region

By sending a significant election observer contingent in October 2012 to Ukraine, Canada can once again demonstrate its leadership in helping the entire Region, more specifically by :

- Helping **Ukraine** return to a path of democracy and civil society
- Ensuring **Poland** has a democratic country on its eastern border
- Ensuring the **Baltic Nations** no longer are isolated as an offshoot of democratic Europe
- Providing an anchor to support democracy in **Russia** and **Belarus**



Summary

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