



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY**

312 ROSA L. PARKS AVENUE, 25TH FLOOR
NASHVILLE, TN 37243

BILL HASLAM
GOVERNOR

October 10, 2013

BILL GIBBONS
COMMISSIONER

The Honorable Ilham Aliyev
President, The Republic of Azerbaijan
c/o The Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan
2741 34th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear President Aliyev:

Congratulations on your re-election!

In my visit to Azerbaijan this past June as part of a delegation from Tennessee, I became very aware of Azerbaijan's growing economy and importance to the future of Europe.

My visit also made me much more aware of the strategic importance of Azerbaijan to America's security interests in the area.

I hope our two countries will have a long-lasting working relationship and friendship. Again, congratulations on your re-election.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Gibbons".

Bill Gibbons
Commissioner



Azerbaijan Presidential Election

Press Statement

Marie Harf

Deputy Department Spokesperson, Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC

October 10, 2013

The United States continuously urged the Government of Azerbaijan to ensure a free and fair electoral process and to respect the freedoms of assembly, association, and speech. It is with regret that we conclude this election fell short of international standards.

The OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly highlighted in their October 10 preliminary statement serious shortcomings that need to be addressed in order for Azerbaijan to fully meet its OSCE commitments. The United States agrees with this assessment and shares OSCE concerns. Other credible non-government organizations such as the Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center reported similar shortcomings. On election day, procedural irregularities were observed including: 1) ballot box stuffing; 2) serious problems with vote counting; and 3) failure to record the number of received ballots. Leading up to election day, the Government of Azerbaijan also maintained a repressive political environment. Authorities interfered with the media and civil society routinely, sometimes violently interrupted peaceful rallies and meetings before and occasionally during the campaign period, and jailed a number of opposition and youth activists.

At the same time, the United States notes the comments in the OSCE statement on constructive steps taken by the Government of Azerbaijan during the election campaign, including the successful registration of Jamil Hasanli and certain other opposition candidates, authorization of some opposition campaign rallies, the decision to invite the OSCE to observe the election, and efficient technical preparation for the election.

Democracy is more than one election. The United States urges the Government of Azerbaijan to respect the freedoms of peaceful assembly, association, and speech. We urge restraint and avoidance of violence by all in the post electoral period. We remain committed to supporting the people of Azerbaijan and working with the Government to further efforts to achieve Azerbaijan's full potential as a stable, prosperous, and democratic member of the international community.

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