

STATEMENT *

The interaction of the CEC with the Justice Institutions, very positive for enforcing laws against electoral violations and crimes during the Parliamentary Elections of May 11, 2025

The Coalition for Reforms, Integration, and Consolidated Institutions (KRIIK) welcomes and supports recent actions by Justice Institutions - including the General Prosecution, the Special Prosecution Against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK), the State Police, and the Central Election Commission (CEC) - to **enhance cooperation and strengthen measures against electoral crimes**¹ ahead of the 11 May 2025 elections.

KRIIK considers the establishment of special groups within local prosecutor's offices and the creation of a dedicated structure within SPAK to investigate electoral offenses as **crucial steps in combating deformation of the will of the citizens during elections and strengthening democracy**. These measures, in KRIIK's view, demonstrate a clear institutional commitment to preventing and prosecuting electoral crimes.

In particular, KRIIK commends the efforts of these institutions² to collaborate closely in and proactively in monitoring, preventing, and prosecuting electoral crimes.

The recent meetings between the State Commissioner of Elections, Mr. Celibashi, and the Head of SPAK, Mr. Dumani,³ as well as the General Prosecutor, Mr. Çela;⁴ the meeting between the General Prosecutor and the Head of the State Police, Mr. Proda;⁵ the signing of cooperation memoranda between institutions; and other coordination activities are all **positive indicators of a serious, lawful, and coordinated institutional commitment**.

KRIIK has consistently emphasized **the need for a strong and independent engagement by Independent Institutions**, particularly **fostering institutional**

¹ Criminal offenses related to the electoral process are provided for in Chapter X of [Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania](#), part of which was changed through [amendments](#) adopted in December 2020. Also [law no. 148/2020](#) sanctions the obligation of the General Prosecutor and the Head of the Special Prosecution, according to the relevant jurisdiction, to provide the CEC with information on the investigation of criminal offenses in the field of elections, which does not violate the preservation of investigative secrecy according to the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Criminal offenses related to active and passive corruption in elections became the object of investigation by the Special Prosecutor's Office Against Corruption and Organized Crime, SPAK.

² - [General Instruction](#) no. 2 dated 18.02.2025 of the Prosecutor General "On administrative and procedural measures by prosecutors with general jurisdiction in the period before and after the elections".

- On 29.01.2025 the Special Structure Against Corruption and Organized Crime, [SPAK approved a plan of measures](#) on the "Implementation of the Strategy for the Investigation and Prevention of Electoral Crime during the 2025 Assembly Elections" within the framework of the investigation and prevention of electoral crimes for the 2025 parliamentary elections.

³ [Meeting](#) of 13.02.2025 between the State Commissioner of Elections and the Head of SPAK, regarding the strengthening of cooperation between institutions for the prevention of election crimes and the proactive investigation of criminal offenses in elections.

⁴ [Meeting](#) of 11.02.2025 between the State Election Commissioner and the Attorney General on strengthening cooperation for the integrity of the electoral process.

⁵ [Meeting](#) of 5.02.2025 between the Prosecutor General and the Director General of the Police, regarding the cooperation and coordination between the prosecution offices of the general jurisdiction and the State Police in the framework of the investigation of election crimes.

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cooperation between the CEC and justice institutions - not only to prevent and punish illegal electoral practices⁶ but, more importantly, to put an end to the culture of impunity stemming from political power or any other authority that violates or challenges the law.

Only effective inter-institutional cooperation can ensure the meaningful prosecution of long-standing negative phenomena that have undermined the integrity of elections in the country for decades, such as vote buying, pressure on public administration or undue influence of the latter on voters, abuse of state resources for electoral advantage, lack of transparency and oversight in political financing, and violations by the electoral administration and political parties. **These issues fundamentally erode citizens' trust in the democratic system** and contradict the principles of a free society and a functioning rule of law.

KRIIK, in line with its ongoing commitment to addressing these issues, monitoring the electoral process, and supporting the proper functioning of the CEC and law enforcement institutions in combating them, **has today submitted a recommendation to the Central Election Commission for completing the regulatory framework to ensure the secrecy of the vote** and create a safe, intimidation-free, and calm environment for voters on election day.⁷

This measure, which must be adopted as a clear requirement of the Electoral Code and one of ODIHR's key recommendations, **will, in the context of cooperation between the CEC, the State Police, and justice institutions, effectively enable the removal of unauthorized individuals** near polling stations, prohibit the recording of voter attendance or other methods of tracking voters, and **dismantle political patronage networks and party surveillance over how and when citizens cast their votes**.

Meanwhile, in light of ongoing developments and the start of the 2025 electoral process, KRIIK **expresses its concern over today's statement by the Prime Minister. Mr. Edi Rama**,⁸ in which he questioned the legitimacy of investigations into electoral crimes and claimed that the surveillance of political parties during the campaign is unjustified. Without delving into what the Prime Minister means by "surveillance of political parties in the campaign," KRIIK views this statement - following previous remarks after the

⁶ See for example:

- KRIIK - [PUBLIC STANCE](#) "The proactive approach of the Central Election Commission in the identification and denunciation of electoral crime, essential for ensuring the integrity of elections and law enforcement in the country", dated 02.06.2023.

- KRIIK - [PUBLIC STANCE](#) "The functionality of the post-election audit, as a mechanism that consolidates the role and development of the CEC's responsibilities towards law enforcement and punishment of policies that violate the integrity of the voter's will", dated 14.12.2023.

⁷ KRIIK – [Recommendation "To complete the regulatory framework for guaranteeing the secrecy of the vote and an environment free from intimidation, calm and safe for voters during the election day"](#), date 20.02.2025.

⁸ During a [public communication](#) on social networks, the Prime Minister and the chairman of the Socialist Party Mr. Edi Rama said that: *"The tragedy is that their mistakes are not like the mistakes of the enterprise of public works, but they cost human lives, trauma and sometimes irreparable psychological wounds, but there is no other alternative than an independent professional justice that respects integrity, freedoms and human rights. Independence is clearly there, now we have to fight together to consolidate the professionalism because there are many positive and negative things. It is a battle to become allies and partners of justice, separate but determined powers because the rights of the executive power cannot be violated. The rights to make decisions cannot be violated, neither can the state administration be pressured or prejudged. And political parties cannot be monitored during an electoral process. I hope it is just a temporary mistake and any kind of surveillance in the territory should immediately stop. We can't go back to the dark ages where who gets involved in politics is monitored. We should not interfere with each other"*.

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arrest of the Mayor of Tirana - as a **clear attempt to exert direct pressure on Justice Institutions and undermine their legitimacy and functioning**. These institutions have a constitutional and legal duty to investigate any violation of the law that threatens the integrity of the electoral process, regardless of its source or perpetrators.

On the other hand, **the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Parliamentary Committee for Good Governance, Rule of Law, and Anti-Corruption, Mr. Fatmir Xhafaj**, during yesterday's meeting of the Commission, called on its experts⁹ to consider possible changes affecting independent institutions, in what he referred to as the "mechanism that controls the controller." This statement represents **yet another concerning message, reinforcing the intimidation that KRIIK has previously warned about**.¹⁰

KRIIK brings to the attention of all public opinion that free and fair elections in the country **cannot be ensured in a climate where the Parliamentary Majority and the Executive try to influence, intimidate or limit the activity of independent bodies of justice**.

Any attempt to interfere in the work of justice institutions or independent institutions represents a serious threat to the rule of law and undermines citizens' trust in the functioning of institutions and rule of law.

KRIIK considers it essential and urges all citizens to actively participate in the fight against electoral crime by utilizing the mechanisms provided by institutions to report¹¹ any violations that threaten the integrity of the elections.

The media and journalists must intensify their vigilance, ensuring that any violations or suspected cases of electoral crimes are reported and brought to public attention.

Full transparency regarding the electoral process and the broader context in which it unfolds, along with strong cooperation among all actors and institutions, are key to ensuring **that these measures do not remain merely on paper but are translated into concrete actions by the competent authorities**.

A free and fair electoral process requires a resolute stance from all institutions and firm consequences for those who seek to manipulate the will of the citizens, **alongside a collective commitment from society to reject and expose such practices**.

In conclusion, **KRIIK calls on international stakeholders** - particularly Albania's Strategic Partners, the diplomatic missions of European partner countries, and international organizations with relevant expertise and experience - **to support the Central Election Commission, Justice Institutions, and the State Police in fulfilling their legal obligations to safeguard the integrity of the elections**, by publicly

⁹ [Meeting](#) of the Ad Hoc Parliamentary Committee "On deepening reforms for good governance, rule of law and anti-corruption for Albania 2030 in the European Union", February 19, 2025. "(...) *And finally there is one thing. Who controls the controller. A problem we have in this mechanism is that we have a number of investigative and control structures, but the problem is who controls these and where they report and how we can achieve this? This is an issue that needs reflection.*"

¹⁰ See for more [KRIIK's Official Letter, dated 04.03.2024](#), "Opinion on the political context in the country, in line with the KRIIK Recommendations on the process of subsequent review of ballot papers and electoral material used by electoral commissions in the Elections for Local Government Bodies on May 14, 2023".

¹¹ The official website of the Special Prosecution Against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK) – [denounce](#) .

The official website of the General Prosecutor's Office - [denounce](#) .

Official website of the Central Election Commission CEC - [denounce](#) .

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supporting their efforts, as well as providing further technical and, where necessary, financial assistance to strengthen their activities.

Tirana, on February 20, 2025!

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