

## PUBLIC STANCE\*

### Intimidating statements against KRIIK and the CEC by the Chairman of the Parliamentary National Security Committee: a growing concern over the Socialist Majority's attitude towards the Independent and Critical Voice of Civil Society and Independent Institutions.

The Coalition for Reforms, Integration and Consolidated Institutions (KRIIK) expresses its deep concern regarding the intimidating statements towards KRIIK and the Central Election Commission (CEC) on March 10, 2025, during the session of the Complaints and Sanctions Commission (CSC) of the CEC, by the MP of the majority and Chair of the Parliamentary National Security Committee, Mr. Nasip Naço.

In his first intervention during the CSC session, of four minutes, in defense of the draft bill "[On some additions and changes in the law no. 81/2020 "On the rights and treatment of prisoners and detainees"](#)", prohibited by Decision<sup>1</sup> of the State Election Commissioner (SEC), after the denunciation<sup>2</sup> made by KRIIK as a law that contradicts Article 91 of the Electoral Code, Mr. Naço, instead of providing legal arguments against the decision of the SEC, discussed instead **KRIIK as the whistleblower** mentioning it a total of five times; **the Commissioner, mocking his decision;** as well as **challenging in advance the decision-making of CSC itself several times, as part of KRIIK's and the opposition's goals, and consequently also guiding it**<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [Decision no. 117, dated 19.02.2025](#) of the State Commissioner of Elections, "For the administrative review, based on the denunciation no. 6, dated 11.02.2025, of the register of denunciations, of the Coalition for Reforms, Integration and Consolidated Institutions/KRIIK" (in Albanian).

<sup>2</sup> For more about KRIIK's denunciation and the arguments brought in it, see Denunciation no. 2 "[Regarding the draft law "On some additions and amendments to law no. 81/2020 "On the rights and treatment of those sentenced to imprisonment and pre-trial detention" and the Decision of the Council of Ministers on giving an opinion on it"](#)", dated 07.02.2025 (in Albanian).

<sup>3</sup> The claims of Mr. Naço in [the meeting of the Complaints and Sanctions Commission \(CSC\) \(min. 21:12–24:58 e videos\)](#) (in Albanian):

"... What I can say and what I wanted this draft law to pass before last year, we in the Criminal Code also have half freedom which is provided for in the law number 81/2020 "On the treatment of convicts", but we have not had any case of the court giving decisions with half freedom in recent years. Also, if we keep this bill unchanged, there are about 500 convicts who should be in low security prisons, but are instead in regular security prisons. This has more to do with basic human rights and freedoms than any interference or benefits from my side or from the majority for electoral effects. The first draft law was filed on December 23, so we are taking it by calendar year, one year ahead. It has been several times on my part as Chair of the National Security Commission, calling on the Minister of Justice and the General Director of Prisons, when the budget is approved, that they constantly asked for funds, and if they did not intervene, we would intervene as a group of deputies. The constitution provides that a group of deputies can propose legislative initiatives. In accordance with the Constitution, with the Rules of the Assembly, I have proposed this draft law in the Assembly. It was done before the deadline that is prohibited by law, there are no benefits, which are defined by law. If we make an interpretation then, if we express certain categories, and we leave it behind without saying who benefits, I'm sorry, but I would not like to extend in this direction. I would not like to dwell on the decision made by the Commissioner. The law stipulates that the Commissioner adopts decisions, orders and instructions. He instead provided a recommendation. Now let's open the dictionary and see what is an instruction and what is a recommendation. I believe I do not want to deal with these terms. I say that it is within the legal term, there are no benefits according to the law. However, I want to say that KRIIK has achieved its goal, it was able to stop this draft law. And if you approve it today, there is no chance that it will pass. It has achieved its goal. I can say that, what the opposition did not do, KRIIK did as a re-transmission lever, that the opposition did not come, but KRIIK

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KRIIK was present in the session following the continuous monitoring of the activity of the CEC for more than a decade, in addition to the overall monitoring of the pre-election situation and all other institutional and political developments that affect the integrity of the elections and the consolidation rule of law.

While on the activity, performance and decision-making of the CEC, including the handling of KRIIK's denunciations, KRIIK will publish Monitoring Reports going forward, **it is deemed necessary to bring to the attention of the Public Opinion, and especially of all Domestic and International Stakeholders, some serious concerns**, that can be derived from this event that took place in the meeting hall of the CEC by representatives of the Assembly of Albania, as **listed below**:

**Before anything else**, it is important to keep in mind that recent reports from both ODIHR and KRIIK have highlighted the significant issue of **public resources being misused for electoral gain**. As a result, KRIIK is closely monitoring the legal mechanisms in place to address this issue. KRIIK interprets these mechanisms broadly, encompassing not only the misuse of material or financial state resources, but also the use of public office and state authority to give the ruling party an electoral advantage. This broader interpretation is in direct opposition to the misinformation spread by some members of the majority, who attempt to falsely portray the issue as simply the misuse of state resources in a material or financial sense.

Moreover, KRIIK is trying to monitor and minimize the use of public resources as a **direct form of orientation, intimidation or even political blackmail towards citizens before the elections**, as it also considers the approval of the draft law in question by the Assembly of Albania.

In this mission, KRIIK is strongly supporting the CEC, promoting the role that this Institution should play in fulfilling the obligations of the Electoral Code. To achieve this, KRIIK has filed with the CEC denunciations presenting different typologies of violations, supplementing them with facts and full interpretation of the law, but asking the CEC to take these denunciations as evidence, as it deems that it should be the CEC itself that initiates and carries out a full administrative investigation, as the law provides.

In this context was the denunciation related to draft law no. 81/2020, which was **still being discussed by parliamentary committees and was expected to be adopted within the period prohibited by the law, as it offers direct benefits to certain categories of the population**, specifically to those who are serving sentences in the penitentiary system.

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came to complain. Their worries that with 20 or 50 convicts the majority can benefit, win the elections, is a pity, or the opposition can lose. I think this decision should have been made in time in accordance with the law. That's it. Your decision as to how it will be has no more effects. KRIIK has achieved its goal. I have to thank them for postponing it in time so that we can pay even more for the coming year, because it will take time for the legal initiative to be implemented to come into force. What I can say is that in the open prison, the provision provides for up to 6 months. There is no way. I did a detailed analysis together with the Institute of Scientific Research in the Parliament, and I have to say that in six months the request that is today, it takes 80 days for the request to be accepted or rejected by the General Directorate of Prisons, by the Commission. In 80 days I can go to America, I can go around the world. That's why I asked for it and it has nothing to do with economic effects, but it has to do with the basic human rights and freedoms of these convicts whose rights are constantly violated. So today, both the one who has been convicted and is serving the sentence for one year and the one who has been sentenced for 20 years remain in the same regime, because it is not possible without making these legal changes. It is up to you to make the proper decision, but as I said, whatever your decision is, KRIIK has achieved its goal. Thank you."

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**First**, it is considered **very disturbing the continuous attempts by the majority to undo the entire legal and regulatory framework that prevents use of public resources** to benefit political parties, especially the one in power, the Socialist Party.

This approach has been visible **in various interpretations to the law, removed from its true meaning, what has been ascertained in the official positions of the Assembly of Albania**, its Administration and the MPs of the majority themselves, some of them Heads of permanent Committees of the Assembly, who consider benefits only financial ones and only when the effects of the implementation of the law are immediate, within 4 months from the date of the elections, i.e. from January 11 to May 11, 2025, **which constitutes a wrong and unlawful interpretation.**

Unfortunately, **this incorrect and distorted approach is also applied by most of the Members of the Complaints and Sanctions Commission (CSC) of the CEC**, although they are one of the Governing Bodies of the Central Election Commission. Their last two decisions, not counting those of previous years, are at best a wrong understanding and application of the law, favoring the ruling majority.

Regarding this concern, it is brought to attention that the current legal framework was amended after the political agreement of June 5, 2020, in which abuse of state resources for electoral advantage was one of the major issues that were addressed.

The Assembly of Albania, by adopting the entire legal package (Electoral Code) at the time with the aim of ensuring the principle of equality in elections, went as far as **it provided in the Code for self-limitation by banning the proposal, adoption or issuing of legal acts by the Assembly itself, which provide for the granting of benefits to certain categories of the population during the period of four months before the date of the elections until the formation of the new government after the elections (article 91, paragraph 4 of the Electoral Code).**

For this purpose, the Code (Article 91, paragraph, 5) **established that the CEC adopts detailed instructions to determine the use and misuse of public resources, which was fulfilled by the CEC adopting Decision No. 9, dated 24.12.2020 by the Regulatory Commission (RC).**

The latter, pursuant to the Code, **charged the Speaker of the Assembly and the Secretary of the Council of Ministers as directly responsible** (the latter regarding the approval of the Decisions of the Council of Ministers). In this Decision, in article 3 paragraph 5 it is provided that: "In implementation of the prohibition defined in paragraph 3, of this article, the Speaker of the Assembly and the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers ensures not to decide or propose not to be put on the agenda of the respective institutions for review and adoption the acts mentioned in paragraph 3 of this article".

Acts that are prohibited by law are the ones that provide for the increase of wages, pensions, economic or social support, the reduction or abolition of taxes, the establishment of fiscal amnesties, privatization or the awarding of assets or rewards., **etc.**, where based on the entire regulatory framework in force, **"etc." meaning other acts that bring favoritism or promises of favoritism, with immediate or subsequent effect after the elections.**

On the other hand, the law clearly defines that **the period of time when the proposal or adoption of acts is prohibited, whether with direct benefits or with promises of such, applied for this election, covers the period from January 11, 2025 to September 2025**, when the new Government resulting from the elections of May 11, 2025 is expected to be approved by the new Assembly.

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Similarly, the Electoral Code, as a law passed by a qualified majority, also specifies situations where acts of this nature can be adopted. It states that the Assembly **can only propose and adopt such acts if the initiative is necessitated by a state of natural disaster**.

**Second**, it is considered that **the defiant attitude of the majority towards the implementation of the law and the intimidating attitude towards the Independent Institutions are very concerning**.

The ongoing and extremely concerning attitude<sup>4</sup> of the Assembly of Albania, its administration, and some Deputies of the socialist majority (including heads of parliamentary committees) towards the implementation of electoral law and CEC by-laws **is contrary to legal provisions**. They **challenge both the law and the CEC's independence in decision-making**.

The current parliament will continue working until the end of July 2025, while the new parliament, as per the Electoral Code, will be elected in May 2025. This unusual situation, coupled with the disregard for the law against abusing public office for the benefit of the majority in power or certain groups thereof, could lead to **illegality and irresponsibility impacting the normal functioning of parliament and a democratic state**. This is particularly dangerous in the remaining period of the current legislature's mandate, including the pre-election period.

KRIIK has criticized several times<sup>5</sup> the impossibility of the Parliament to function normally and fulfill and exercise its duties, as the Constitution and the Law provide. This mode of operation has meanwhile created an often arbitrary and overbearing climate of the majority in Parliament and outside it, an unacceptable behavior which seems to have extended even further, **leading to a highly polarized climate in the country and to a threatening and intimidating approach, a manifestation of which are also the statements of the Chairman of the Parliamentary National Security Committee in Monday's session in the CEC hall**.

The fact that Mr. Naço, besides being a deputy in several legislatures, is an experienced lawyer and a former Minister of Justice **makes his intimidating intervention in the CSC session even more serious**, while he was there also as a representative of the Assembly of Albania, as he was not personally a party to the process.

His statement that “... *I would not like to dwell on the decision of the Commissioner. The law stipulates that the Commissioner takes decisions, orders and instructions. The commissioner has instead issued a recommendation. Now let's open the dictionary and see what is an instruction and what is a recommendation. I believe I do not want to deal with these terms.* ...”, is inadmissible, in KRIIK's judgment, since it **judges and mocks the ability and decision-making of the State Election Commissioner** without dealing

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<sup>4</sup> "... The absence of reaction to this case of infringement, is nothing else but an invitation to all Members of Parliament to continue this practice, by not respecting and infringing the CEC decision, and in this way, by challenging the law, the institution and the entire preventive mechanism for the misuse of state resources specified in the Electoral Code. ..." For more see the [Open Letter "The Assembly of Albania should support the Central Election Commission \(CEC\) to implement the law on prevention of misuse of state resources"](#), published on 31.03.2023.

<sup>5</sup> See for more [KRIIK publications](#) in the years 2022, 2023, 2024.

at all with the content of the decision that was appealed, while on the other hand it is also a message for a "proper decision-making" to the members of CSC.

Likewise, his repeated statements to the members of the Complaints and Sanctions Commission (CSC) with "... *if you approve it today, there is no way it will pass. It has achieved its goal. I can say that, what the opposition did not do, KRIIK did, as a lever for retransmission.*

... *Your decision as to how it will be has no more effects. KRIIK has achieved its goal.*

... *It is in your judgment to make the proper decision, but I said, whatever that is, KRIIK has achieved its aim. ...",* are meaningless and unacceptable, in the judgment of KRIIK, as they are nothing but **messages to CSC members** to reduce the role and usefulness of their decision-making, in turn encouraging the opposite reaction in them **to make the "proper decision" and not to fall in the service of the opposition or KRIIK's goals**, who, according to Mr. Naço, it has become a tool of the opposition.

While Mr. Naço had gone to the session to appeal the Commissioner's decision/recommendation to stop the draft bill, he calls any decision-making by the CAS useless, since, according to him, "there is no chance that [the draft bill] will be adopted".

**However, this stance of Mr. Nacho changes a few minutes later.** In response to the question<sup>6</sup> made by one of the members of the CSC, whether the plenary sessions of the Assembly have been interrupted, since according to him the approval of this draft law will now be postponed for the next parliament, he answers that "*I didn't say it in that sense. We can have one or two sessions according to the calendar, then the parliament will rest to focus on the electoral campaign. We will return on May 20, it will continue until the end of July. I did not say that it will be for the next parliament. It will be postponed for now times. ...*", **thus proving his deliberate and intimidating approach with the previous statements.**

Also, **it is deemed unacceptable and absurd** that Mr. Naço himself openly admits that **with this draft law, the vote of 20 or 50 convicts can be guided and directed**, but this is not a problem for him, since, according to him, it does not affect whether or not the majority wins the elections.

In an intentional way, he directs this finding to the members of CAS in advance **to precede and stop any possible interpretation of this nature** by any of its members. Specifically, he stated that "*... their concerns [of KRIIK] that with 20 or 50 convicts the majority can benefit and win the elections is unfortunate,...*" while this statement was never made by KRIIK.

**Thirdly**, are considered **very disturbing the frequent attempts at intimidation towards the critical approach of civil society actors, especially towards the media and non-governmental organizations.**

**Outright intimidation** by the Head of the Parliamentary National Security Committee, in the meeting hall of the CEC, in front of one of the Governing Bodies of the CEC, competent to impose sanctions for violations of the law, of an NGO accredited to observe

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<sup>6</sup> The question of Mr. Rusmaili: "Apparently, you say, the fate of this draft law will not be resolved before the elections, it will be a matter that will belong to the next parliament. Is this because the plenary sessions have been interrupted?"

elections<sup>7</sup>, with many years of experience in monitoring the integrity of elections, especially in denouncing violations of the law related to the misuse of public resources and the financing of election campaigns of political parties, **is considered alarming, especially for the discouraging and intimidating messages that are conveyed to citizens' participation** as denunciators of violations of the law, further reducing their trust in law enforcement and the proper functioning of institutions.

The entire statement made by Mr. Naco in the CSC session **constitutes a message with many disturbing meanings**, while it comes after the publication of the Statement<sup>8</sup> of KRIIK for the necessity of selecting candidates for deputies with moral and professional integrity for the Parliamentary Elections of May 11, 2025.

The declaration that "... *I want to say that KRIIK has achieved its goal, it was able to stop this draft law. And if you approve it today, there is no chance that it will pass. It has achieved its goal. I can say that, what the opposition did not do, KRIIK did as a retransmission lever; the opposition did not, but KRIIK complained. ...*" **constitutes a clear and direct intimidation towards KRIIK, but not only.**

**The accusations of Mr. Naço as to KRIIK's motives for raising the denunciation, apart from being speculative, unsubstantiated**, clearly ignoring the continuous critical and demanding approach of KRIIK for law enforcement and standards towards all the institutions and entities involved in it, of any political force, about which Mr. Naço and all the deputies are aware, **also contradict the principles of a democratic debate and constitute an unjustified attack** towards a civil society organization, just because its position does not align with those of the people in power.

Such rhetoric is alarming, since it aims **to attack and delegitimize civil society organizations, which have a key role** in the monitoring of democratic processes and in the supervision of the integrity of state institutions.

KRIIK has raised before **concerns about attacks on civil society**, especially towards those who observe election processes, where it "...has brought to the attention of the public opinion in the country, especially of the institutional and decision-making actors, that the obstacles in exercising the mission of the observation organizations, the lack of transparency and the continuous violation of the law, or **intimidation in various forms, seen especially in the light of the mass patronage raised** in the state administration and in almost the entire Albanian society, **it is increasingly eroding democratic spaces and [...] undermining the transparency and legitimacy of elections**, undermining the freedom and independence of organizations that work for the public interest."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Accredited by the decision of the State Election Commissioner no. 72, dated 10.02.2025.

<sup>8</sup> "... it is vital for Albania's future in the EU that no political force includes in its candidate lists individuals with problematic legal backgrounds or ties to such individuals, or those involved in activities that undermine public trust, individuals under the influence of persons subject to decriminalization laws, former collaborators of the communist-era State Security, individuals expelled from the justice system through vetting processes or who have avoided vetting, and those who have violated or are in conflict with the law in Albania's partner countries. ...".

For more see the Statement "[Political parties must seriously commit to nominating only candidates of high moral and professional integrity for the Assembly of Albania, and to conducting a fair, responsible, and substantive electoral campaign](#)", published on March 5, 2025.

<sup>9</sup> See KRIIK Statement "[State authorities to speak against violations of citizens' civil and political rights](#)", published on January 15, 2024.

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The Report of the Venice Commission "Election observers as defenders of human rights" of December 2024<sup>10</sup>, qualifies **election monitoring organizations as defenders of human rights and their contribution as essential** for guaranteeing the integrity of the electoral processes.

The report emphasizes that a free and active civil society is a key element for a functional democracy, helping to increase transparency, citizen participation and to highlight irregularities.

For this reason, **any form of intimidation or delegitimization against them constitutes a serious threat to democratic standards and human rights.**

It is considered particularly disturbing that such a discourse occurs on the eve of elections, **further deepening the spirit of political polarization and creating a climate of fear for organizations** whose mission is to protect democracy and citizens' rights.

The approach used by political parties, and in particular by representatives of the majority, **reflects a dangerous tendency to delegitimize any critical voice**, automatically treating them as political opponents.

This is not only an attempt to silence civil society, but also **an attack to democratic processes and free and fair elections.**

Attacks on civil society organizations, especially those that monitor elections and state institutions, are an unacceptable practice in a democratic state.

In this situation, it is considered necessary that political actors, especially the socialist majority, **stop divisive rhetoric and attacks on civil society**, as well as engage in an open, reasoned and fact-based debate.

Respecting the pluralism of opinions and **guaranteeing a safe environment for civil society actors is essential** for the functioning and future of a true and healthy democracy.

To conclude this Public Stance, **KRIIK appeals to the Speaker of the Parliament H.E.Ms. Elisa Spiropali**, on behalf of herself and the Parliament of Albania, **to publicly distance herself from the position and intimidating statements made by Deputy Naço**, expressing support for the proper and independent functioning of the CEC and the role of civil society, as well as proactively engaging to ensure the correct implementation of the Electoral Code and Decision no. 9 of the RC of the CEC regarding the legal acts that are expected to be adopted by the Assembly until the end of this last parliamentary session.

While appreciating the initiative of **the Prime Minister of Albania, H.E. Mr. Edi Rama** for considering KRIIK's proposal for the approval of Decision<sup>11</sup> for measures to monitor the behavior of the state administration during the election process, **KRIIKs calls upon Him, as the Head of the Socialist Majority and the Government, to publicly distance**

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<sup>10</sup> The Venice Commission. "[Report on Election Observers as Human Rights Defenders](#)" CDL-AD(2024)039-e, 2024. Approved by the Council for Democratic Elections at its 81st meeting (Venice, 5 December 2024) and adopted by the Venice Commission at its 141st Plenary Session (Venice, 6-7 December 2024).

<sup>11</sup> [Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 122, dated 26.02.2025](#), "On taking measures and monitoring the activity, behavior or use of human resources of the state administration, during the election process for the general elections for the year 2025", published on 06.03.2025 in Official Gazette No. 46, year 2025.

**himself from the attitude and intimidating statements made by Deputy Naço, expressing support for the proper and independent functioning of the CEC and for the role of civil society, as well as to engage proactively to ensure the correct and proper implementation of the Electoral Code and Decision no. 9 of the RC of the CEC by the Members of the Council of Ministers and its General Secretary, as well as related to the acts that are expected to be approved by the government until the formation of the new government after the elections.**

Also, **KRIIK calls on the OSCE Presence and the Council of Europe Office in Tirana to take a stand and react** regarding these statements of intimidation of Deputy Naço, as well as regarding the overall situation of the intimidating approach to independent and critical voices by civil society actors.

It is also called, upon **international actors, especially the Embassy of the United States of America, the Delegation of the European Union, as well as the Diplomatic Corps of the member countries of the European Union to closely follow the pre-election situation and the concerns raised** on the necessity of respecting the law and democratic standards in the electoral process, as well as the best values of Euro-Atlantic freedom and democracy.

**Tirana, on March 13, 2025!**

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***\*This Document is published in Albanian and in English.  
The Albanian version is the only official document.***

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