



YEREVAN PRESS CLUB

**MONITORING OF ARMENIAN MEDIA COVERAGE
OF THE JUNE 20, 2021 SNAP ELECTIONS TO
THE RA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

REPORT

**ON MONITORING OF ARMENIAN MEDIA
COVERAGE OF THE POST-ELECTION PROCESSES
(Third Stage. JUNE 20 - JULY 4, 2021)**

This research was made possible through the support of IMS (International Media Support). The content of this report is the sole responsibility of Yerevan Press Club and do not necessarily reflect the views of IMS

REPORT

ON MONITORING OF ARMENIAN MEDIA

COVERAGE OF THE POST-ELECTION PROCESSES

(Third Stage. JUNE 20 - JULY 4, 2021)

MONITORING OF ARMENIAN BROADCAST MEDIA coverage of the June 20, 2021 snap elections to the RA National Assembly, carried out by Yerevan Press Club, covered all 6 Armenian national TV channels (First Channel of Public Television of Armenia, ATV, “Armenia”, “Yerkir Media”, “Kentron” and “Shant”) and the Public Radio of Armenia. The study was implemented in three stages: the period preceding the official pre-election promotion (May 31 - June 6, 2021), the official campaign (June 7-18, 2021) and the post-election period (from the closing of polling stations on June 20 to July 4, 2021). The current report presents the results of the third of the mentioned stages (*see below the monitoring methodology*).

In the post-election period, the Yerevan Press Club monitoring team studied the reaction to the electoral process and the assessment of the course and results of the parliamentary elections by political forces, authorities, including the official bodies responsible for organizing and holding elections, observer missions, as well as various groups of the Armenian public.

DURING THE TWO WEEKS OF THE FINAL STAGE of monitoring, the greatest attention to the post-election processes, as in the coverage of the election campaign itself, was shown by the First Channel of Public Television of Armenia (*hereafter for the quantitative results of the monitoring see the attached tables*). “Yerkir Media” and “Kentron” TV channels lagged slightly behind it. All the three leaders by this indicator in the days following the vote still continued to devote to the elections both news reports and interviews of “guest-in-studio” format, as well as discussion programmes. The Public Radio of Armenia appeared to be the fourth in terms of frequency of references to the monitoring theme, followed by “Shant”, “Armenia” and ATV channels, respectively. On the air of these four broadcasters the post-election situation was covered mainly through news programmes. At the same time, in contrast to the coverage of the election campaign, among the seven media studied the gap in terms of attention to the topic of the final stage of monitoring turned out to be smaller (the leader, PTA First Channel, had 268 references and ATV - 102, which was the last by this indicator).

FROM THE 11 GROUPS defined as monitoring objects, according to the aggregate data of 7 studied broadcasters, **the official state bodies of Armenia**, including representatives of political power, electoral commissions, law enforcement agencies, etc., addressed the assessments and results of the elections most intensively. In the relevant statements and expressions, the emphasis was placed on the official election results, due to which content with no connotationality prevailed here. The overwhelming majority of cases, where connotationality was present in the references of representatives of this group, was related to the recorded violations of the electoral legislation, which determined the balance of positive and negative assessments in favor of the latter (6 versus 86). In general, it was the references of all 11 monitored groups to the topic of electoral violations that predetermined the prevalence of negative assessments (370 versus 73 positive).

The second most active group was the **representatives of political forces that did not pass the electoral threshold** and did not get seats in the new composition of the RA National Assembly. On the one hand, they were much more in number than those who gained seats in the parliament (22 and 3, respectively), but the very fact that the media continued to show interest in their assessments of the elections should be considered a positive thing.

Although in total two other groups (“Civil Contract” party, which won the elections, and the two blocs that will form opposition factions in the National Assembly) received a little more attention from the studied broadcasters than the relatively unlucky forces, individually they were inferior by this indicator to the political forces that did not get into parliament. The latter’s assessments of the elections were more often negative than positive (38 and 8, respectively). Meanwhile, in their case the connotationality was mainly formed not by means of mentioning specific violations, but as a reflection of general conclusions regarding the course of the elections and their results. Anyway, here we should note certain discrepancies in assessments: most of the political forces from this group spoke about the elections in a negative or neutral manner, and a significantly smaller part of them, first of all, “Shirinyan-Babajanyan Alliance of Democrats” bloc also commented in a positive manner.

The third in terms of coverage was the group of **political forces that lost to the winner, but passed the electoral threshold** (“Armenia” and “With Honor” blocs). Their assessments of the course and results of the elections were the most critical of all 11 groups monitored - 135 negative, 27 neutral and not a single positive reference. And if the most intensively covered group (representatives of state bodies) in their negative assessments based itself on the electoral violations of opposition supporters (pressure from employers on their employees, vote buying), then the new parliamentary opposition focused on the use of administrative resources by the authorities, illegal persecution of their supporters throughout the whole campaign.

Similarly, on the air of seven studied broadcasters **journalists and active users of social networks** spoke about the elections without positive assessments, with 38 negative ones instead. However, at the same time, in the references of representatives of this group, which turned out to be the fourth in terms of coverage, a neutral attitude towards the course and results of the elections prevailed (121 references).

Approximately equal number of positive and negative opinions about the elections was recorded in the **“Others”** group, where the monitoring team included, in particular, officials and politicians from foreign countries. In their statements neutral assessments prevailed - 112 (with 10 positive and 12 negative references).

The “Civil Contract” party, which won the elections, among the 11 groups defined as objects of monitoring, was only the sixth in terms of the intensity of its references to the theme of the post-election stage of monitoring. Judging by the reactions of journalists from a number of media, this circumstance could be due to the relatively frequent refusals of representatives of this group to give interviews and participate in discussion programmes. At the same time, unlike their political rivals, in the overwhelming majority of connotational references to the theme of this stage of monitoring, they spoke positively about the course and results of the elections (22 against 2 negative ones).

Noteworthy are the indicators for connotational references of the **“Civil society/Expert community”** group, which ranked seventh out of 11 in terms of the intensity of coverage. While on PTA First Channel their assessments of the elections were positive in 9 cases and never negative, on the air of five other broadcasters a balance in favor of negative opinions was recorded. In particular, on the air of “Yerkir Media” criticism from the

representatives of this group was expressed in 26 cases, with not a single positive assessment. This circumstance illustrates the biased approach of certain media to the choosing of those who spoke about the elections on their air.

Less than in the previous elections, the media attention was attracted by the opinions of **international/foreign election observers/institutions**, while the assessments of the representatives of this group were either positive (12) or neutral (39). The studied broadcasters showed even less interest in **local observers and monitoring groups**, and in their case 11 negative and no positive assessments were recorded with only 2 neutral ones. This difference in media attention to the statements of foreign and local observers is explained by the fact that the former gave, as a rule, general assessments of the electoral process, while the latter concentrated on the violations they recorded during the campaign and voting.

QUITE VARIED turned out to be the picture, which reflected separately studied media interest in the reactions on the elections of different monitored groups.

PTA First Channel and Public Radio focused mainly on the official state bodies.

ATV paid the greatest and equal attention to the same group and to the political forces that did not pass the electoral threshold. The latter group turned out to be the leader on the air of “Armenia” TV channel, having slightly surpassed the official state bodies.

The two opposition forces that entered the parliament were in the lead on “Yerkir Media”, leaving the official state bodies also in the second place.

The political forces that did not enter the parliament received the most attention on the air of “Shant”, and the official state bodies following them in terms of frequency of coverage were more than two and a half times behind (65 and 25 references, respectively).

The most atypical indicator was recorded on “Kentron” TV channel, where most often the reactions of journalists and active users of social networks were broadcast on the theme of the final stage of YPC monitoring. The position of “Prosperous Armenia” party (referred in the framework of the study to the group of political forces that did not enter the RA National Assembly of the new convocation), with which this broadcaster is associated, were reflected here in a rather restrained manner. As noted in the reports on the previous stages of the monitoring, “Prosperous Armenia” party demonstrated such an attitude towards its media resource for the first time in recent years, and also for the first time since its establishment it did not enter the legislative body of the country.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON MONITORING

MONITORING OF ARMENIAN MEDIA COVERAGE of the June 20, 2021 Snap Elections to the RA National Assembly is carried out by Yerevan Press Club within the framework of “Armenian Media and Elections” project, supported by IMS (International Media Support).

The monitoring is conducted in three stages:

- **first stage** - May 31 - June 6, 2021 (pre-election period);
- **second stage** - June 7-18, 2021 (pre-election promotion period);
- **third stage** - June 20 (from 20.00 till 02.00) - July 4, 2021 (post-election processes).

OBJECTIVES OF THE MONITORING are to define and determine through analyzing quantitative and qualitative data:

- the level of attention of the media of Armenia to the June 20, 2021 snap elections to the RA National Assembly;
- the level of balanced presentation of various positions of the political forces participating in the snap parliamentary elections;
- how free and impartial the media were in informing the voters of the parties/blocs running in elections to the RA National Assembly, ensuring their access to media to express their views and opinions, thus assisting the voters in making an independent and conscious choice;
- how compliant the media were with the legislative provisions, regulating the coverage of the pre-election promotion;
- how actively the media touched upon the post-election situation and reflected the spectrum of assessments of the electoral process.

In order to fulfil the objectives mentioned above the monitoring included quantitative and quantitative-qualitative study methods. The quantitative methods were limited to purely arithmetical calculations of units and volume of broadcast content. Quantitative-qualitative methods were based on the calculations of content units, subjected to certain analysis by the monitoring team.

Monitoring covered 7 broadcast media:

- *national terrestrial TV channels* - **First Channel of Public Television of Armenia, ATV, “Armenia”, “Yerkir Media”, “Kentron” and “Shant”**;
- **Public Radio of Armenia.**

On the above-mentioned channels the study covered the main issue of news programme, news and comment programmes, as well as current affairs/discussion programmes aired in the evening prime time (**18.00-00.00**). Monitoring did not include pre-election promotion slots within the programmes, commercial/social advertisement as well as TV tickers.

The object of the monitoring were:

- **on the first stage** (pre-election period, May 31 - June 6, 2021) - all the pieces containing references to the supposed/registered participants of the June 20, 2021 snap elections to the RA National Assembly;
- **on the second stage** (pre-election promotion period, June 7-18, 2021) - all the pieces containing references to the parties/blocs participating in the June 20, 2021 snap elections to the RA National Assembly;
- **on the third stage** (post-election processes, June 20 [from 20.00 till 02.00], June 21 - July 4, 2021) - all the pieces containing references to the results of the June 20, 2021 snap elections to the RA National Assembly and assessments of these elections by different layers of the Armenian public and international community, as well as to post-election processes in general.

MONITORING METHODOLOGY

I. The main unit of the study was **TV** and **radio piece**.

The following was regarded as a TV, radio piece:

The **airtime unit**, distinct in its theme, composition and design, i.e.

- a separate story in the newscast;
- a separate communication, presented by the programme host;
- a part (section, story) of the programme, touching on different issues/problems, made distinct by theme, composition and design (with a bloom, a jingle, etc.);
- announcements of the pieces within the programmes were viewed as a part of the story they referred to;
- the text of the host, introducing the piece (report, etc.), was viewed as a part of this piece (report, etc.).

Of these:

- **News/news and comment programmes** were divided into stories, and each story was treated as a separate independent piece;

- **Current affairs/discussion programmes** were treated in the following way:

1. If the programme was devoted to one topic, it was treated as one independent piece;
2. If the programme was tessellated, i.e. divided into independent thematic units, then every unit was treated as a separate independent piece.

II. Monitors recorded the duration of the air studied on a daily basis: main issue of news programme, news and comment programmes, as well as current affairs/discussion programmes aired from 18.00 till 00.00. The programmes that started but did not end till

18.00 were not considered: the monitoring started after the end of the programme. The programmes that started but did not end till **00.00** were studied in full, until their end.

III. Monitoring team **determined and recorded**:

1. Total amount of pieces studied containing references to the theme of the monitoring

The monitoring team determined and recorded the number of pieces containing references to the results of the June 20, 2021 snap elections to the RA National Assembly and assessments of these elections by different layers of the Armenian public and international community, as well as to post-election processes in general.

On June 20 2021, from 20.00 (close of ballot) till 02.00 the whole air of the studied TV channels was subject to monitoring. In the following days (June 21 - July 4, 2021), as before, on the seven studied channels main issue of news programme, news and comment programmes, current affairs/discussion programmes aired in prime time (from 18.00 till 00.00) were studied.

2. Number of authors' references to elections/post-election processes in pieces

The monitoring team determined and recorded the number of references to the elections and post-election processes.

A list of the authors of references was prepared.

AUTHORS OF REFERENCES

1.	Official state bodies of Armenia
2.	Winner political force of the parliamentary elections ("Civil Contract" party)
3.	Political forces that passed the electoral threshold in the parliamentary elections ("Armenia" bloc, "With Honor" bloc)
4.	<p>Political forces that participated in the parliamentary elections but did not pass the electoral threshold*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Free Motherland" Bloc • "Azatakan" Party • "Liberty" Party • "National Agenda" Party • "National-Democratic Axis" All-Armenian Party • "Fair Armenia" Party • "Prosperous Armenia" Party • "Zartonk" National Christian Party • "Sovereign Armenia" Party • "Bright Armenia" Party • "All-Armenian National Statehood" Party • "Armenian National Congress" Party • Democratic Party of Armenia • European Party of Armenia • "Armenian Motherland" Party • "Republic" Party • "Our Home Is Armenia" Party • "United Homeland" Party

SNAP PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 2021

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Shirinyan-Babajanyan Alliance of Democrats” Bloc • “Verelq” Party • “Citizen’s Decision” Social-Democratic Party • “5165 National-Conservative Movement” Party
5.	Other Armenian politicians
6.	International/foreign observers/institutions
7.	Local observers/monitoring groups
8.	Civil society/Expert community
9.	Sociological surveys/research, Exit polls/Vox populi
10.	Media/journalists/social networks
11.	Others

**The list of parties/blocs is presented in accordance with Armenian alphabetical order*

Hereafter the following principle applied: the reference (nature of reference) of the same author to the monitoring theme in the same piece was recorded once regardless of how many times it was repeated in the piece. If the piece contained references of several authors to the monitoring theme, then all of them (like the nature of reference) were recorded in the appropriate columns.

3. Assessment of elections/post-election processes by authors of references in pieces

The monitoring team determined and recorded the attitude of authors of references to the elections/post-election processes contained in pieces:

- **positive (+)**
- **negative (-)**
- **neutral (0)**

Here also the principle mentioned above in point 2 applied.

All the doubts of the monitor regarding the uncertainty of the nature of reference were interpreted in favor of neutral reference.

All the above-mentioned categories were measured in ***units***.

TABLES

**Third Stage. JUNE 20 (from 20.00 till 02.00),
JUNE 21 - JULY 4, 2021**

**First Channel of Public Television of Armenia, ATV, “Armenia”, “Yerkir Media”,
“Kentron”, “Shant”, Public Radio of Armenia**

June 20 (from 20.00 till 02.00) - July 4, 2021

Total amount of studied pieces containing references to the monitoring theme (in units)					836
	AUTHORS OF REFERENCES	Number of references to the elections/ post-election processes by their authors (in units)	Assessment of elections/post-election processes by the authors of references (in units)		
			+	-	0
1.	Official state bodies of Armenia	328	6	86	236
2.	Political forces that participated in the parliamentary elections but did not pass the electoral threshold	247	8	38	201
3.	Political forces that passed the electoral threshold in the parliamentary elections (“Armenia” bloc, “With Honor” bloc)	162	0	135	27
4.	Media/journalists/social networks	159	0	38	121
5.	Others	134	10	12	112
6.	Winner political force of the parliamentary elections (“Civil Contract” party)	87	22	2	63
7.	Civil society/Expert community	73	10	38	25
8.	International/foreign observers/institutions	51	12	0	39
9.	Sociological surveys/research, Exit polls/Vox populi	15	0	8	7
10.	Local observers/monitoring groups	13	0	11	2
11.	Other Armenian politicians	12	5	2	5
	Total (in units)	1281	73	370	838

First Channel of Public Television of Armenia

June 20 (from 20.00 till 02.00) - July 4, 2021

Total amount of studied pieces containing references to the monitoring theme (in units)					166
	AUTHORS OF REFERENCES	Number of references to the elections/post-election processes by their authors (in units)	Assessment of elections/post-election processes by the authors of references (in units)		
			+	-	0
1.	Official state bodies of Armenia	101	6	23	72
2.	Others	35	3	1	31
3.	Political forces that participated in the parliamentary elections but did not pass the electoral threshold	30	2	8	20
4.	Winner political force of the parliamentary elections ("Civil Contract" party)	27	10	0	17
5.	Political forces that passed the electoral threshold in the parliamentary elections ("Armenia" bloc, "With Honor" bloc)	20	0	15	5
6.	Civil society/Expert community	16	9	0	7
7.	Media/journalists/social networks	13	0	1	12
8.	Local observers/monitoring groups	10	0	8	2
9.	International/foreign observers/institutions	8	2	0	6
10.	Other Armenian politicians	4	3	0	1
11.	Sociological surveys/research, Exit polls/Vox populi	4	0	2	2
	Total (in units)	268	35	58	175

ATV channel

June 20 (from 20.00 till 02.00) - July 4, 2021

Total amount of studied pieces containing references to the monitoring theme (in units)					67
	AUTHORS OF REFERENCES	Number of references to the elections/post-election processes by their authors (in units)	Assessment of elections/post-election processes by the authors of references (in units)		
			+	-	0
1.	Official state bodies of Armenia	32	0	10	22
2.	Political forces that participated in the parliamentary elections but did not pass the electoral threshold	32	3	7	22
3.	Political forces that passed the electoral threshold in the parliamentary elections ("Armenia" bloc, "With Honor" bloc)	12	0	10	2
4.	Media/journalists/social networks	7	0	2	5
5.	Winner political force of the parliamentary elections ("Civil Contract" party)	6	4	0	2
6.	Others	6	1	1	4
7.	International/foreign observers/institutions	3	2	0	1
8.	Other Armenian politicians	2	1	0	1
9.	Civil society/Expert community	1	0	1	0
10.	Sociological surveys/research, Exit polls/Vox populi	1	0	1	0
11.	Local observers/monitoring groups	0	0	0	0
	Total (in units)	102	11	32	59

“Armenia” TV Channel

June 20 (from 20.00 till 02.00) - July 4, 2021

Total amount of studied pieces containing references to the monitoring theme (in units)					67
	AUTHORS OF REFERENCES	Number of references to the elections/post-election processes by their authors (in units)	Assessment of elections/post-election processes by the authors of references (in units)		
			+	-	0
1.	Political forces that participated in the parliamentary elections but did not pass the electoral threshold	33	3	5	25
2.	Official state bodies of Armenia	29	0	8	21
3.	Political forces that passed the electoral threshold in the parliamentary elections (“Armenia” bloc, “With Honor” bloc)	15	0	13	2
4.	Others	12	0	1	11
5.	Winner political force of the parliamentary elections (“Civil Contract” party)	8	4	0	4
6.	Media/journalists/social networks	7	0	1	6
7.	International/foreign observers/institutions	4	1	0	3
8.	Civil society/Expert community	3	0	3	0
9.	Other Armenian politicians	2	1	0	1
10.	Sociological surveys/research, Exit polls/Vox populi	1	0	1	0
11.	Local observers/monitoring groups	0	0	0	0
	Total (in units)	114	9	32	73

“Yerkir Media” TV Channel

June 20 (from 20.00 till 02.00) - July 4, 2021

Total amount of studied pieces containing references to the monitoring theme (in units)					166
	AUTHORS OF REFERENCES	Number of references to the elections/post-election processes by their authors (in units)	Assessment of elections/post-election processes by the authors of references (in units)		
			+	-	0
1.	Political forces that passed the electoral threshold in the parliamentary elections (“Armenia” bloc, “With Honor” bloc)	52	0	46	6
2.	Official state bodies of Armenia	44	0	11	33
3.	Media/journalists/social networks	31	0	9	22
4.	Civil society/Expert community	28	0	26	2
5.	Others	27	0	7	20
6.	Political forces that participated in the parliamentary elections but did not pass the electoral threshold	26	0	9	17
7.	Winner political force of the parliamentary elections (“Civil Contract” party)	15	0	2	13
8.	International/foreign observers/institutions	13	2	0	11
9.	Sociological surveys/research, Exit polls/Vox populi	5	0	2	3
10.	Other Armenian politicians	2	0	1	1
11.	Local observers/monitoring groups	0	0	0	0
	Total (in units)	243	2	113	128

“Kentron” TV Channel

June 20 (from 20.00 till 02.00) - July 4, 2021

Total amount of studied pieces containing references to the monitoring theme (in units)					186
	AUTHORS OF REFERENCES	Number of references to the elections/post-election processes by their authors (in units)	Assessment of elections/post-election processes by the authors of references (in units)		
			+	-	0
1.	Media/journalists/social networks	76	0	24	52
2.	Official state bodies of Armenia	43	0	12	31
3.	Political forces that participated in the parliamentary elections but did not pass the electoral threshold	43	0	3	40
4.	Political forces that passed the electoral threshold in the parliamentary elections (“Armenia” bloc, “With Honor” bloc)	30	0	25	5
5.	Others	22	5	0	17
6.	Winner political force of the parliamentary elections (“Civil Contract” party)	14	2	0	12
7.	International/foreign observers/institutions	6	3	0	3
8.	Civil society/Expert community	4	0	2	2
9.	Sociological surveys/research, Exit polls/Vox populi	2	0	2	0
10.	Other Armenian politicians	0	0	0	0
11.	Local observers/monitoring groups	0	0	0	0
	Total (in units)	240	10	68	162

“Shant” TV Channel

June 20 (from 20.00 till 02.00) - July 4, 2021

Total amount of studied pieces containing references to the monitoring theme (in units)					76
	AUTHORS OF REFERENCES	Number of references to the elections/post-election processes by their authors (in units)	Assessment of elections/post-election processes by the authors of references (in units)		
			+	-	0
1.	Political forces that participated in the parliamentary elections but did not pass the electoral threshold	65	0	1	64
2.	Official state bodies of Armenia	25	0	5	20
3.	Political forces that passed the electoral threshold in the parliamentary elections (“Armenia” bloc, “With Honor” bloc)	18	0	13	5
4.	Others	13	0	2	11
5.	Media/journalists/social networks	12	0	0	12
6.	Winner political force of the parliamentary elections (“Civil Contract” party)	10	1	0	9
7.	International/foreign observers/institutions	5	1	0	4
8.	Civil society/Expert community	3	0	0	3
9.	Other Armenian politicians	0	0	0	0
10.	Local observers/monitoring groups	0	0	0	0
11.	Sociological surveys/research, Exit polls/Vox populi	0	0	0	0
	Total (in units)	151	2	21	128

Public Radio of Armenia

June 20 (from 20.00 till 02.00) - July 4, 2021

Total amount of studied pieces containing references to the monitoring theme (in units)					108
	AUTHORS OF REFERENCES	Number of references to the elections/post-election processes by their authors (in units)	Assessment of elections/post-election processes by the authors of references (in units)		
			+	-	0
1.	Official state bodies of Armenia	54	0	17	37
2.	Others	19	1	0	18
3.	Political forces that participated in the parliamentary elections but did not pass the electoral threshold	18	0	5	13
4.	Civil society/Expert community	18	1	6	11
5.	Political forces that passed the electoral threshold in the parliamentary elections ("Armenia" bloc, "With Honor" bloc)	15	0	13	2
6.	Media/journalists/social networks	13	0	1	12
7.	International/foreign observers/institutions	12	1	0	11
8.	Winner political force of the parliamentary elections ("Civil Contract" party)	7	1	0	6
9.	Local observers/monitoring groups	3	0	3	0
10.	Other Armenian politicians	2	0	1	1
11.	Sociological surveys/research, Exit polls/Vox populi	2	0	0	2
	Total (in units)	163	4	46	113



YEREVAN PRESS CLUB

www.ypc.am