

Campaign Watch 2012

Newsletter 05



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Newsletter No. 5

May 15, 2012

A total of 6,770,013 voters were called to cast their ballots at 8,585 polling stations (29 in prisons and 37 in Serbia's diplomatic missions abroad) on May 6, 2012. The official results published May 10 by the *Republican Election Commission* (<http://www.rik.parlament.gov.rs>):

a) Presidential election

Following are the final results of the presidential election held on May 6, 2012:

- Total number of registered voters 6.770.013
- Number of voters who took part in the election 3.908.652
- Total number of ballots delivered to polling stations 6.761.300
- Total number of unused ballots 2.850.164
- Total number of used ballots 3.908.652
- Total number of invalid ballots 174.660
- Total number of valid ballots 3.733.992
- Number of votes won by individual candidates:

Rank	Candidate's first and last name	Name of political party, coalition, citizens' group	Number of votes won	% of votes
1.	BORIS TADIĆ	Choice for a Better Life	989,454	25.31
2.	TOMISLAV NIKOLIĆ	Serbian Progressive Party (SNS)	979,216	25.05
3.	IVICA DAČIĆ	Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), Party of United Pensioners of Serbia (PUPS), United Serbia (JS)	556,013	14.23
4.	VOJISLAV KOŠTUNICA	Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS)	290,861	7.44
5.	ZORAN STANKOVIĆ	United Regions of Serbia (URS)	257,054	6.58
6.	ČEDOMIR JOVANOVIĆ	Turnaround: Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), Socialdemocratic Union (SDU), Wealthy Serbia (BS),	196,668	5.03

		Vojvodina Party (VP), Democratic Party of Sandžak (DPS), Green Ecological Party – the Greens, Party of Bulgarians of Serbia (PBS)		
7.	JADRANKA ŠEŠELJ	Serbian Radical Party (SRS)	147,793	3.78
8.	VLADAN GLIŠIĆ	Citizens' Group "The Gates" ("Dveri")	108,303	2.77
9.	IŠTVAN PASTOR - PASZTOR ISTVAN	Union of Vojvodina Hungarians - Vajdasagi Magyar Szovetseg	63,420	1.62
10.	Prof. ZORAN DRAGIŠIĆ, PhD	Citizens' Group Movement of Workers and Peasants	60,116	1.54
11.	MUAMER ZUKORLIĆ	Group of Citizens	54,492	1.39
12.	DANICA GRUJUČIĆ	Socialdemocratic Alliance	30,602	0.78

b) Parliamentary election:

Final results of the election of People's Deputies to the People's Assembly, held on May 6, 2012 are as follows:

1. Total number of registered voters 6.770.013
2. Number of voters who took part in the election 3.912.904
3. Total number of ballots delivered to polling stations 6.754.742
4. Total number of unused ballots 2.841.838
5. Total number of used ballots 3.910.312
6. Total number of invalid ballots 170.995
7. Total number of valid ballots 3.739.317
8. Number of votes won by individual candidates and of mandates won by candidate tickets:

Rank	Name of ticket	Number of votes won by election ticket	Number of mandates won by election ticket
1.	LET US SET SERBIA IN MOTION – TOMISLAV NIKOLIĆ (Serbian Progressive Party, New Serbia, Association of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and Entrepreneurs of Serbia, Coalition of Refugees' Associations in Serbia, Movement Strength of Serbia - BK, People's Peasant Party, Bosniak People's Party, Democratic Party of Macedonians, Roma Party, Movement of Vlach Unity, Movement of Socialists, Movement Economic Renaissance of Serbia)	940,659	73
2.	CHOICE FOR A BETTER LIFE – BORIS TADIĆ	863,294	67
3.	IVICA DAČIĆ - Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), Party of United Pensioners of Serbia (PUPS), United Serbia (JS)	567,689	44
4.	DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF SERBIA – VOJISLAV KOŠTUNICA	273,532	21
5.	ČEDOMIR JOVANOVIĆ - TURNAROUND: Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), Socialdemocratic Union (SDU), Wealthy Serbia (BS), Vojvodina Party (VP), Democratic Party of Sandžak (DPS), Green Ecological Party – the Greens, Party of	255,546	19

	Bulgarians of Serbia (PBS)		
6.	UNITED REGIONS OF SERBIA – MLAĐAN DINKIĆ	215,666	16
7.	VAJDASAGI MAGYAR SZOVETSEG - PASZTOR ISTVAN – UNION OF VOJVODINA HUNGARIANS	68,323	5
8.	DEMOCRATIC ACTION PARTY OF SANDŽAK – DR. SULEJMAN UGLJANIN	27,708	2
9.	ALL TOGETHER: BDZ,GSM,DZH,DZVM, SLOVAK PARTY – EMIR ELFIĆ	24,993	1
10.	NONE OF THE LISTED ANSWERS	22,905	1
11.	COALITION OF THE ALBANIANS OF THE PREŠEVO VALLEY - KOALICIONI I SHQIPTAREVE TE LUGINES SE PRESHEVES	13,384	1
12.	SERBIAN RADICAL PARTY – DR. VOJISLAV ŠEŠELJ	180,558	0
13.	DVERI FOR SERBIA'S LIFE	169,590	0
14.	MOVEMENT OF PEASANTS AND WORKERS	57,199	0
15.	COMMUNIST PARTY – JOSIP BROZ	28,977	0
16.	SOCIALDEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE – NEBOJŠA LEKOVIĆ	16,572	0
17.	REFORMIST PARTY – PROF. MILAN VIŠNJIĆ, PhD	8,867	0
18.	MONTENEGRINE PARTY – NENAD STEVOVIĆ	3,855	0

A total of ten parties and coalitions were elected to the new Parliament. 39 parties will have deputies, only four of them having contested the election alone. The Parliament elected 2007 had 24 parties and an independent deputy represented in it.

Due to the amount of information contained therein, results of the election of deputies in the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and local assemblies in municipalities in Serbia are not covered by this report.

Events that preceded the elections

The last week before the election was marked by several incidents that do not jeopardize the legality and legitimacy of the elections, but do cast a dark shadow on the democratic profile of contending candidates, parties and coalitions, as well as authorities and some media.

In its *Interim Report* (<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/90149>) for the period between Apr. 4 and 24, the OSCE Limited Election Observer Mission assessed the campaign as "competitive but generally calm". The document depicts the legal framework, rules and procedures envisaged with the aim to secure a free, fair and honest election process. However, LEOM stopped short of noting that the Supervisory Board (please see Campaign Watch Newsletter No. 4, page 4) as

foreseen by the Law on Election of People's Deputies, had not been established.

1. *Republican Broadcasting Agency* (RRA) banned a video clip featuring presidential hopeful Boris Tadić who, in an interview to Croatian RTV said that he does "not take particular pride" in being President of Serbia. The clip, produced by the *Serbian Progressive Party* (SNS) represented SNS's reaction to a similar presentation of Mr. Tomislav Nikolić's present statements on Europe and Serbia's EU aspirations as opposed to his statements several years ago. The latter was extensively broadcast in all electronic media.

2. Although RRA Rules expressly forbid electronic media to broadcast entertainment programs featuring politicians who compete in the election, no action was taken against *Prva* TV which Apr. 27 broadcast an hour long show featuring Mr. Tadić as the only guest. RRA May 10 held an emergency session on this issue, postponed its decision, but underlined that "it was not a standard program, but a special one", because it was named, announced and scheduled differently from other shows in that series.

3. During a presentation of his *Democratic Party of Serbia* (DSS) to Serbian Radio Television (RTS) on April 28, DSS President Vojislav Koštunica said that, if elected, he will not "feel bound by agreements on Kosovo" reached under the EU auspices between Belgrade and Priština.

4. Srđan Šajin and Dragoljub Acković, SNS activists (both are Roma politicians, and Mr. Šajin is a former MP) were attacked Apr. 29 by a group of self-declared DS members in the Roma settlement in Čurug, Vojvodina.

5. Firearm shots were heard during and after a campaign rally in Novi Pazar, Sandžak, on Apr. 30, 2012. Municipal authorities and supporters of Mufti Zukorlić -- a presidential candidate -- exchange accusations whereas the official police investigation bears no fruit.

6. A large number of Serbian farmers participated in days long protests -- including road blocks -- against Government's decision to change its agricultural subsidies policies to farmers' disadvantage. SPS President and presidential candidate Ivica Dačić said Apr. 30 in a rally that "opposition parties are forcing these farmers to protest".

7. *United Citizens of Leskovac*, a group contending the local election in that city, will press criminal charges against the chairperson and members of the Election Commission in Leskovac for alleged forging UCL supporters' signatures on other parties' candidate lists.

8. *Serbian Radical Party* (SRS) Apr. 30 accused SNS activists of having beaten the former's activists when pasting posters in New Belgrade and Surčin.

9. Addressing a rally Apr. 30, Member of the DS Main Board and incumbent Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić embarked on an exercise of both animosity towards a political opponent and religious intolerance, when he said that "a vote given to Tomislav Nikolić is a vote given to Mufti [Zukorlić]".

10. *Roma Party* Apr. 30 announced that it would seek EU protection for its voters and activists because of "frequent attacks", the Press daily reports (http://www.pressonline.rs/sr/glasaj2012/Najnovije_vesti/story/217704/Romska+partija+tra%C5%BEi+za%C5%A1titu+EU.html)

11. Frequently repeated warnings that "incidents" and "Kosovo extremists' attacks" aimed at disturbing the election process in Kosovo have represented one of the key topics of Mr. Dačić's addresses to the public in his capacity as Interior Minister. Bearing on mind that these statements were made in his campaign speeches, as well as his practice to not always separate his ministerial duties from campaign appearances, they can be viewed as intentional parts of the campaign propaganda.

12. Interior Ministry announced May 4 that eight ethnic Albanians living in Southern Serbia were arrested by security services on charges of war crimes committed 2001¹. Although the rules of conduct set forth by the RRA, allow exceptions to the pre-election silence only in cases of national emergency, natural calamity and similar catastrophic events, most media have extensively carried Mr. Dačić's statements on that occasion. Having in mind the fact his repeated statements that the Interior Ministry is the best in the present Government, as well as his repeated pledge to fight organized crime, terrorism and corruption as cornerstones of his campaign rhetoric, the publicity given to these arrests cannot be viewed outside the campaign context and thus represent a breach of the pre-election silence.

13. Popular singer-songwriter Đorđe Balašević May 5 held an open-air concert at the central square in Novi Sad, which attracted some thirty thousand spectators. Presidential candidate Boris Tadić attended the event. In violation of regulations set forth by the RRA, numerous media reported the event and Mr. Tadić's attendance. Mr. Balašević's decision to stage a concert immediately before the election is viewed as a gesture of support to Mr. Tadić's presidential bid.

¹ Legal experts, civil society activists and numerous observers challenge the official story behind these arrests, substantiating their claim by the fact that the Assembly of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia adopted on July 3rd, 2002 a Law on Amnesty (<http://www.pregled-rs.com/include/data/dlst0075.pdf>) for all those who had committed the crime of terrorism on the territory of Preševo, Medveđa and Bujanovac municipalities between Jan. 1 1999 and May 31 2001, or for whom there is a founded suspicion to that effect.

Events during and after the election

14. As the elections approached, the Government made several steps aimed at polishing its image in the electorate and the general public:

- Fuel prices were reduced by 1.5 to 3 RSD per liter;
- Out of 1 billion *Telekom Srbija* shares issued, 15% should be distributed to citizens free of charge. After years of tug-of-war, Government May 4 decided that each eligible citizen will be given 31 shares worth a total of €70.37 (€2.27 apiece). Already on May 5 there were queues in front of post offices where these shares are to be handed out to citizens;
- Belgrade Mayor's Housing Committee published May 5 a list of citizens who qualify to receive assistance in solving their housing problems. A total of 133 subsidized apartments will be given to socially disadvantaged families;
- A housing complex containing non-profit flats is being built on the site where one of the largest Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) garrisons used to be. In the presence of Mr. Tadić, Housing and Environment Minister Dulić and numerous other dignitaries of the ruling coalition, keys of five hundred flats were handed to their owners in a widely televised ceremony on May 3. Observers argue that the number of flats transferred to their owners on that occasion is way below 500;
- A €400 million investment by the Belgian supermarket chain *Delhaize*, intended for a modernization of its network throughout Serbia, was announced on May 3 on front pages of most print media. A correction came after the Election Day: the company plans to invest €40 million.

15. Several persons were arrested on May 6, the Election Day, in the vicinity of a polling station in Novi Sad on charges of having attempted to pay prospective voters 2,500 RSD each to vote for the party they acted on behalf of. The authorities did not specify which party the suspects represented.

16. Aleksandar Vavić, a notorious bully who leads *Alkatraz*, one of the "soccer club fan" gangs in Belgrade, was seen and photographed standing close to Mr. Dačić on the main podium at the SPS campaign HQ on May 6 when the outcome of the election was celebrated. Mr. Vavić has a thick criminal record and an eventful history of violent behavior which brought him a jail sentence and twelve criminal charges filed against him pending. Accounts of Mr. Vavić having organized the celebration at the SPS HQs -- including spectacular indoor fireworks for which a necessary special permit had not been applied for -- were neither confirmed nor denied.

17. Numerous complaints have been voiced throughout Serbia, citing irregularities in voter registries. The most frequent complaint referred to names of persons who have been dead for years, and still entered in the voters' lists. Cases were reported of persons dead since the 1990s who had not been called to vote in 2000, 2003 and 2007, but were sent the call to participate in this year's elections.

18. Social networks played a very active role in this campaign. Apart from being used by politicians who utilized their Facebook, Twitter, blogs and other profiles and

accounts to attract support from prospective voters, these networks' involvement in the election process was largely limited to numerous individuals' comments, statements and other contributions relating to breaches of pre-election silence, voters' turnout, and incidents at polling stations.

19. RRA ordered May 6 cable TV providers in Serbia to stop broadcasting programs of three stations -- one from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina each, and a local cable network -- on charges of breach of "pre-election silence".

20. In an attempt to boost fairness during the presidential runoff campaign, the RRA May 8 issued an additional directive forbidding the media to broadcast and otherwise disseminate video clips and other products that contain intentionally cut, shortened or otherwise edited presentations of either candidate, done with the view to distort and/or manipulate their meaning. It is also forbidden to use previously unpublished recordings. The Directive was amended after several radio, TV and cable networks demanded the authority to "clarify and facilitate" their work in covering the campaign.

21. Touring Serbia on his campaign trail, presidential candidate Boris Tadić visited a dairy in Blace in Southern Serbia, where an energy block built with the US Embassy's support was launched. The festivity was attended by US Ambassador Mary Warlick. Democratic Party's (DS) website (<http://www.ds.org.rs/medija-centar/vesti/14751-otvorena-biogasna-elektrana-kod-blaca>), as well as print and electronic media, presented the report on the event as part of Mr. Tadić's campaign.

22. Presidential candidate and SNS President Tomislav Nikolić May 10 called an emergency press conference in order to present to the public what he called irrefutable evidence of an election fraud. Mr. Nikolić showed a bag with 3,000 ballots found in a garbage container. These ballots -- 2,800 of which were allegedly cast in favor of the SNS-led coalition -- were substituted by others, printed in Poland and marked with votes for his opponents, Mr. Nikolić claims. He went on to say that names of 500,000 dead or non-existing persons have been entered into the Voters' Register in order to enable such manipulations. Numerous journalists have indicated that a directive was issued to media not to give these complaints any "disproportionate" publicity

23. Due to irregularities established by proper authorities, local elections have been annulled and will be repeated 16 polling stations in Belgrade and 22 in Niš.

24. At its session held on May 10, 2012 the Republic Election Commission was to consider a total of 36 complaints relating to irregularities detected during the election process, mostly the number of ballots counted exceeding the number of registered voters. All 36 complaints were rejected without debate: RIK's explanation was that the complaints were filed untimely or by unauthorized persons.

25. President of the *Union of Vojvodina Hungarians* Ištvan Pastor (SVM - VMS) demanded a recount of votes and substantiated his request by the assertion that his ticket at both presidential and parliamentary elections was victim of a fraud. According to the preliminary results, Mr. Pastor's tickets scored 91,401 at the presidential and 95,375 at the parliamentary election. A day later final results were published by the RIK, stating that Mr. Pastor and his party had won 63,262 and 67,841 votes, respectively.

26. The conclusion of the parliamentary election in Serbia is not followed by the beginning of negotiations on the composition of a new government. While candidates who did not qualify for the May 20 runoff and their constituent parties are contemplating support for either of the two presidential candidates -- thereby hoping to conquer better positions when the new government is shaped -- presidential candidate Boris Tadić insists that there will be no government formation before the end of the presidential election. "I will allow no one to pressure or blackmail me", he says and simultaneously hinges his choice of coalition partner(s) on their support for his presidential bid.