

Much more would be possible in Azerbedischan than this depressive and repressive society we are confronted with today

The OSCE ODHR LTO Mission has put the results of the elections under doubt. What do you think about it? --- ATƏT-in Demokratik Təsisatlar və İnsan Hüquqları Bürosu seçkinin nəticələrini şübhə altına alıb. Bəs siz bu haqda nə düşünürsüz?

I share the doubts of the OSCE/ODHR. Not in the sense, that Mr. Aliyev made a majority, but in the sense, that this election might be called a free and fair one. Elections are much more than what happens at the election's day. The PACE statement focusses too much on the election day only. When you read both carefully you see that they are not even contradictory. But you can be easily misled by the wordings.

In order to be free and fair you need a fair competition over several months and a real choice between different candidates who are able to show different convincing programmes and policies to the people. Neither of this could have been observed in Azerbaijan during the last months. If there is no real freedom of assembly, speech and media you can not deliver free and fair elections.

One issue has not been paid sufficient attention on and your views are interesting for us. How do you assess the issue of third term of presidency of Ilham Aliyev? --- Bu məsələ bir qədər diqqətdən kənar qalıb, amma sizin bu mövzuda fikirləriniz maraqlıdır. İlham Əliyevin üçüncü dövr prezidentliyinə necə yanaşırsınız ?

Mr Aliyev produced the necessary change of the constitution in plebiscite which was euphemistically called „referendum“ five years ago. I did question the fairness of that decision and how it was made. And of course, term limits for presidents – being two or three mandates – are always helpful to build a democracy. But it's too late to discuss this now in AZ. The change was done and it will be up to a future government and parliament to change the constitution again for the better. But this will be done by a real democratic government, a government really dedicated to a strong democracy, which will propose the reform to the people – from this president you can not expect such a wise proposition.

You came here again after several years. The situation in the field of democracy and human rights has deteriorated. What is your position about it? --- Bir neçə ildən sonra yenidən Azərbaycana gəldiniz. Demokratiya və insan hüquqları sahəsində vəziyyət daha da pisləşib. Sizin bu barədə mövqeyiniz nədən ibarətdir?

It's very sad and depressing indeed. I could see it very well in Gangia. Ten years ago you had there a vibrant and diversely engaged society. Today most of the civic energy is lost. Only a few citizens try to behave as citizens. And they are confronted with heavy oppressions and their freedoms are violated by the regional executive power who forgets, that in order to progress a society needs criticism, public debate and controversial positions. Neither of this exists anymore in most parts of the Azeri society.

After all the serious irregularities and violations what steps do you expect from the democratic world? Could we believe that the oil and gas, strategic interests will be put in the second line? --- Baş vermiş ciddi pozuntulardan sonra demokratik dünyadan Azərbaycanla bağlı hansı addımları gözləyirsiniz? İnanırsanız ki, bu dəfə neft-qaz, strateji maraqlar arxa plana keçəcəkdir?

The democratic world has to look closer and better and feel more free to say what you see when you do it this way. Too many just say, what their governments and energy lobbyists want them to say. This is not helpful for the democratic world nor for the future of democracy in Azerbaijan. But the change has and will come from the inside. Too many are aware that the future of Azerbaijan is in danger if there is not more freedom of speech and thinking and public debate.

What recommendations would you like to make to the democratic forces of Azerbaijan? --- Bu şəraitdə Azərbaycanın demokratik qüvvələrinə hansı tövsiyələr verərdiniz?

To gather and to reflect profoundly and deeply. Also in a profound and self-critical way. And then they have to address the people, educate and mobilise them. It's much more possible in Azerbaijan than this depressive and repressive society we are confronted with today.