



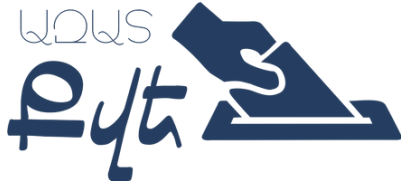
“AZAT QVE” OBSERVATION MISSION

**ELECTIONS OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT BODIES
OF TUMANYAN COMMUNITY**

27 SEPTEMBER 2026

Short-Term Observation Mission Report

Lori Region, Enlarged Tumanyan Community



We Youth
NGO of Lori Region

The observation of the 27 September 2026 elections of local self-government bodies in Tumanyan community was carried out by the **“Azat Qve”** observation mission.

The mission is implemented by the **“Youth for Change” Civil Society Development NGO** and the **“MENQ” Youth NGO of Lori Region**.

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Abbreviations

CEC	Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Armenia
TEC	Territorial Electoral Commission
PEC	Precinct Electoral Commission
LSG	Local self-government
CSO	Civil society organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation

1. About the Mission

1.1. The “Azat Qve” Observation Mission

The “Azat Qve” (“Free Vote”) observation mission was established on 7 March 2026. It is an independent and impartial civic initiative founded and led by young people. Its aim is to contribute to the conduct of free, fair, transparent and democratic elections in Armenia, to strengthen the lawfulness of electoral processes and to develop public oversight.

The mission operates on the principles of independence, impartiality and political neutrality, and neither supports nor campaigns for or against any political force or candidate.

Following the elections to the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia held on 7 June 2026, the mission also observed the elections of local self-government bodies in Tumanyan community, Lori region, held on 27 September 2026. The observation was carried out by the “Youth for Change” Civil Society Development NGO and the “MENQ” Youth NGO of Lori Region.

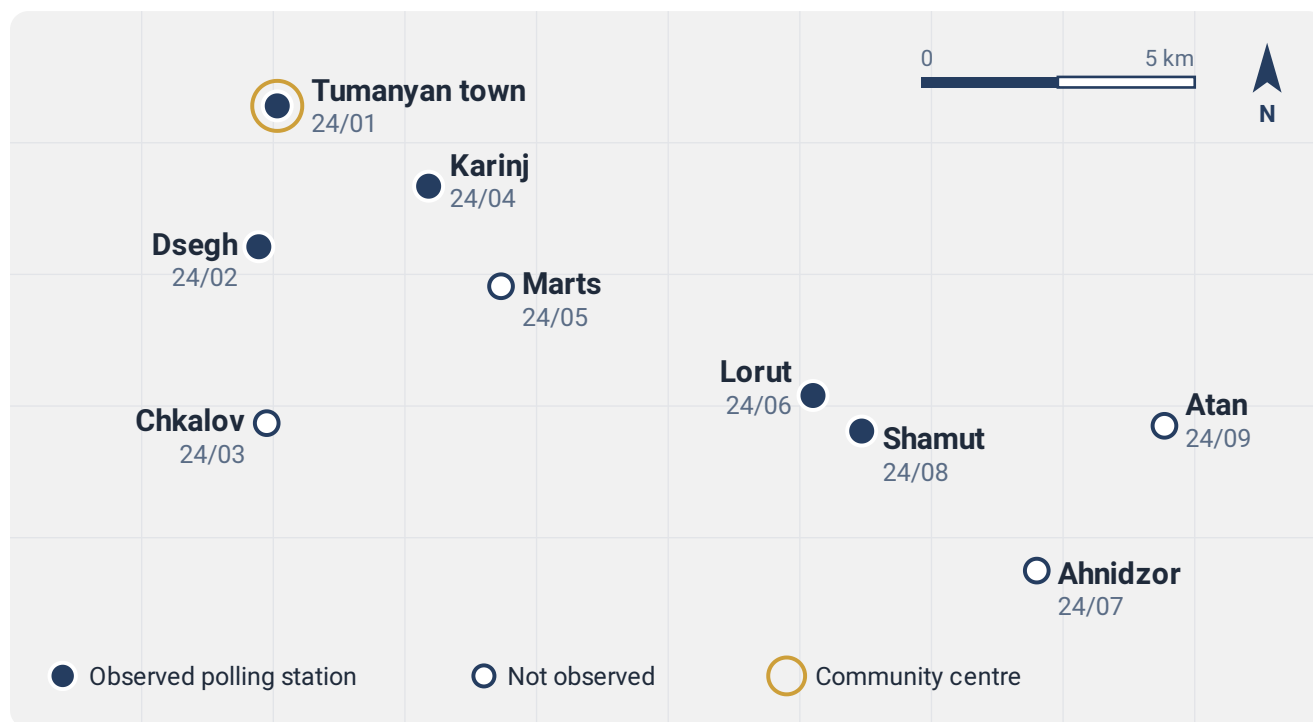
1.2. About the Elections

On 27 September 2026, elections to the Community Council (Avagani) of the enlarged Tumanyan community were held under the proportional electoral system. According to data provided by the Migration and Citizenship Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, the number of voters for these elections was **4,953**.

Only one party, Civil Contract, took part in the elections; its electoral list was headed by the incumbent head of the community. Where only one political force is nominated, voting is organised in a “for” or “against” format, using two separate ballot papers.

Voting took place in 9 polling stations formed within Territorial Electoral Commission No. 24.

Polling stations of Tumanyan community



Schematic map based on the geographic location of settlements.

1.3. Observation Methodology and Coverage

- **Type of observation:** short-term observation conducted exclusively on election day (from the opening of polling stations until the completion of the vote count).
- **Coverage:** 5 of the community’s 9 polling stations: Tumanyan town (24/01), Dsegh (24/02), Karinj (24/04), Lorut (24/06) and Shamut (24/08).
- **Tools:** standardised questionnaires, polling station reports, entries in the PEC logbook, and the work of the coordination centre.
- **Additional sources:** information and data published by the CEC.

2. Election Day Observation Findings

2.1. Level of Voter Awareness

A low level of voter awareness was recorded at the observed polling stations. A significant share of voters were not sufficiently informed about the electoral system and voting procedures.

Voters were particularly unaware of the “for” or “against” format applied where only one political force is nominated, notably the procedure of choosing one of the two separate ballot papers and placing it in the envelope.

Impact. The lack of awareness caused crowding and confusion at polling stations and slowed down the voting process.

Causes. Official voter information activities either did not fully reach the community’s remote and rural settlements, or the information methods used were insufficient to reach a broad range of voters.

2.2. Preparedness, Composition and Politicisation of Precinct Electoral Commissions

Observation of PEC work revealed serious problems related to members’ professional preparedness, the composition of commissions and their impartiality.

Insufficient professional preparedness

A number of PEC members did not have a full command of the procedures established by the Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia. As a result, technical and procedural violations were recorded, particularly during the organisation of voting, the completion of electoral documents and the vote count.

Conflict of interest and high degree of politicisation

The observation showed that a significant share of PEC members were employees of the community administration or of organisations subordinate to the community, or persons affiliated with them. These commission members displayed markedly politicised conduct and a biased attitude in favour of the incumbent head of the community and the electoral list he headed.

Regardless of whether these persons exerted any direct influence on voters, the presence at the polling station of persons linked to the community administration, acting as PEC members, created a perception of being monitored among voters and could have affected the free expression of their will.

The work of commissions with such a composition generated tension at polling stations, impeded the neutral functioning of PECs and substantially reduced trust in the electoral process.

2.3. Physical Accessibility of Polling Station Premises

The physical accessibility of polling station premises in Tumanyan community was assessed as unsatisfactory. The table below presents the accessibility data published by the CEC for all 9 polling station premises in the community.

Polling station	Settlement	Premises	Voting room floor	Ramp	Entrance accessibility	Observed
24/01	Tumanyan town	Palace of Culture	2	None*	Inaccessible	Yes
24/02	Dsegh	Club	1	None	Inaccessible	Yes
24/03	Chkalov	Basic school	1	Available	Accessible	No
24/04	Karinj	Community hall	1	None	Partially accessible	Yes
24/05	Marts	Secondary school	1	None*	Inaccessible	No
24/06	Lorut	Community hall	1	None	Partially accessible	Yes
24/07	Ahnidzor	Community hall	1	Available	Accessible	No
24/08	Shamut	Basic school	1	None	Partially accessible	Yes
24/09	Atan	Kindergarten	1	None	Partially accessible	No

Table 1. Accessibility of polling station premises (source: CEC). Floor 1 = ground floor.

* No ramp is available and, according to CEC data, one cannot be built.

Accessibility issues

Polling stations were located in public buildings (schools, a palace of culture, a club, community halls and a kindergarten). Of the 9 polling station premises, only 2 had a ramp (24/03 and 24/07), and only these two had an entrance assessed as accessible. The entrances of 4 premises were assessed as partially accessible and 3 as inaccessible. None of the 5 premises with steps had handrails. At polling station 24/01 in Tumanyan town, the voting room was located on an upper floor (second storey). None of the 5 polling stations observed by the mission had a ramp.

No signs in Braille and no International Symbol of Access were present at any of the polling station premises.

Exercise of the right to vote

For persons with disabilities, older persons and voters with limited mobility, access to the voting room was extremely difficult or impossible, in breach of the principle of ensuring equal and accessible conditions for all voters.

3. Summary

As a result of the short-term observation conducted on election day of the Tumanyan community LSG elections, the mission identified problems in three main areas.

- **Low voter awareness:** voter information activities did not reach voters in the community’s remote and rural settlements, and voters were particularly uninformed about the “for” or “against” voting format. As a result, crowding and confusion arose at polling stations and the voting process slowed down.
- **Insufficient preparedness and politicisation of PEC members:** an incomplete command of procedures led to violations, while the involvement of employees of the community administration and of community-subordinate organisations, or persons affiliated with them, resulted in a conflict of interest and biased conduct.
- **Insufficient accessibility of polling station premises:** only 2 of the 9 premises had a ramp, and none of the 5 observed polling stations did. This restricted the participation of persons with disabilities, older persons and voters with limited mobility.

4. Recommendations

Based on the problems identified, the “Azat Qve” observation mission puts forward the following recommendations.

- 1. Voter information.** The CEC and civil society organisations should conduct more targeted and accessible voter information campaigns, with a particular focus on the settlements of enlarged communities, including on the “for” or “against” voting procedure applied where only one political force is nominated.
- 2. Composition and neutrality of commissions.** The practice of appointing community civil servants and employees of the community administration and of community-subordinate organisations to PECs should be reviewed in order to rule out conflicts of interest; requirements for ensuring political neutrality and the training of PEC members should also be strengthened.
- 3. Ensuring accessibility.** Together with LSG bodies and the CEC, polling station premises should be inventoried in advance and their full physical accessibility ensured (ramps meeting the standards, handrails, and voting rooms located on the ground floor).



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30 September 2026