



RESPONSE TO PETITION

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PETITION No.: **421-02586**

BY: **MR. BEZAN (SELKIRK-INTERLAKE-EASTMAN)**

DATE: **SEPTEMBER 18, 2018**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **SIGNED BY THE HONOURABLE CHRYSIA FREELAND**

Response by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Electoral system

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

This government understands and values the important role that established democracies like Canada can play in the promotion and protection of democracy around the world. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has made it a personal priority to ensure that Canada restore its meaningful role in election observation around the world. This means funding international assistance programs, sending Canadian diplomats abroad to work as observers, and a firm commitment to playing a major role in observation and support for the upcoming election in Ukraine.

The former Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) had a multi-year election observation program, but when the previous Government decided to combine Canadian International Development Agency and the Department of Foreign Affairs, they made the decision to end dedicated funding for election observation.

Since the decision to close the Multilateral Election Observation Program was made, Canada's missions around the world have found ways to engage in observation missions, but this work has been piecemeal.

Despite this, Global Affairs Canada continues to use appropriate resource channels to support election observation. These channels include international development assistance, the Peace and Stabilization Operations Program, the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, and Canadian diplomatic missions. The type and amount of support for election

observation varies depending on electoral cycles and needs. In 2015/16 and 2016/17, for instance, Global Affairs Canada provided over \$8 million to support international election observation missions, with nearly 200 Canadians deployed as international election observers.

International election observation is most effective when it is embedded in broader efforts that address electoral and democratic institutions and practices. The Government of Canada therefore also supports long-term, far-reaching democratic reforms that contribute to sustainable results in the areas of inclusive governance, democracy, pluralism and human rights. In many countries around the world, the Government uses its international assistance programming to strengthen key institutions, build capacity, and create opportunities for credible and transparent elections.

The Government of Canada will continue to support the strengthening of democratic institutions and processes through institutional support to international and regional organizations such as the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

The Government of Canada is fully committed to send a strong and effective monitoring mission to the upcoming presidential and legislative election in Ukraine and will work with all its international partners to ensure a free and fair electoral process.