

The election of deputies of the lower house (Mazhilis) of the Kazakhstan parliament will be held on January 10, 2021. For the first time in 16 years, it will not be early but as constitutionally prescribed - 2 months before the expiration of the term of office.

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At the same time, elections to maslikhats (local representative body elected by the people of the region, city of national status, and capital city or district - editor's note) of all levels will be held.

Registration of parties ended on December 10. The election campaign will be held from December 10, 2020 to January 9, 2021. The election silence day comes into effect 24 hours before the election.

Who participates in the 2021 election?

Only 5 political parties:

- Nur Otan
- the democratic party of Kazakhstan «Ak Zhol»
- the people's democratic party «Auyl»
- «Adal» party
- the People's Party of Kazakhstan

What's new in this election?

For the first time, a [30 per cent quota for the representation of women and young people](#) on party lists will be applied in this election. In other words, at least one third of candidates from the parties must be women and citizens under 29 years of age.

It applies not only to the election of deputies of the Mazhilis, but also to Maslikhats. In the past, local elections were held under the single-member system, i.e. voters voted for each

candidate individually, now they vote for party lists.

As to the lower house of parliament, the first chairperson and two secretaries of permanent committees will be elected out of the deputies of the parliamentary opposition.

Why do I have to vote if it's clear who's going to win?

The active civic engagement and maximum voter turnout are a pledge of fair elections. The fewer Kazakhstanis turn out to the polls, the more chances for ballot rigging.

In other words, boycotting and staying at home is not a very good option. It's rather a statement of fact that you are ready to lose even without jumping into a fray.

Citizens do not vote frequently, so you need to use this right to make your strong contribution to determine the path the country will take in the post-election period.

OK. What should I know about my rights then?

The right to elect and to be elected granted to all Kazakhstanis is undoubtedly one of the key constitutional rights of citizens. It gives voters an opportunity to take part in the current state administration process and to influence the formation of the authorities.

Citizens of Kazakhstan reaching the age of 18 may take part in elections regardless of their background, social, official and material position, sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, views, residence or any other circumstances.

Citizens who are found incapable by court, or who are imprisoned by court order may not take part in the elections.

Every Kazakhstani may check if he/she is on the list of voters and file a complaint regarding his/her absence or exclusion from it, and also regarding any inaccuracies and errors found in the background data about the voter.

The election commission shall consider relevant complaints on the same day. If the complaint is dismissed, you should be provided with a copy of the reasoned dismissal

decision. The decision may be appealed in court at the respective election commission's location.

In case of any amendments made to the list of voters, the precinct election commission shall give notice of the same to the superior election commission. It is strictly forbidden to make amendments to the lists after the vote counting began.

According to the [election law](#), in Kazakhstan voters participate in the elections on equal grounds and each of them has a right to one vote.

Do I have to tell about my choice?

No, you don't have to. Voting is a secret that eliminates every possibility of control over voters. The secret voting principle means that no one but you may know about your choice on your ballot. Also, no one may put pressure on you regarding your choice of any specific candidate.

What if I am offered money for my vote?

According to the [Criminal Code](#) of Kazakhstan, violation of the secrecy of ballot by a candidate's proxy or a member of the election commission is a punishable offence that can lead to imprisonment.

According to article 150 of the Criminal Code of Kazakhstan, interfering with free exercise by a citizen of his/her voting rights, as well as illegal interference in the work of election commissions or commissions and interfering with the voting, performance of obligations related to the registration of a candidate, party lists, vote counting and establishment of election results are punishable by a fine in the amount of up to one hundred monthly calculation indices (100 MRP in 2020 = 277,800 tenge or 638 dollars), or corrective labour in the same volume, or compulsory community service for up to 120 hours.

The current legislation provides for punishment for both bribery and vote selling. In other words, not only candidates and their representatives may be held liable, but also the voters. The punishment for this offence is a fine up to 4,000 monthly calculation indices or 11,112,000 tenge (26,240 dollars) or corrective labour in the same volume, or personal restraint for up to four years, or imprisonment for the same period.

Moreover, it is important to remember that such actions do not meet the international standards of the country's obligations to hold fair and transparent elections.

How can I find my name on the list of voters?

The only source of information for the electoral list is the national database of individuals. A relevant local executive body compiles an electoral roll by place of residence.

The reason for inclusion into the voters list is the registration at the place of residence in the territory of a polling station.

As to the citizens of Kazakhstan with a temporary residential registration, they are listed as voters only if they apply to local executive bodies with relevant statements. Besides, even if a citizen is not registered, he/she may apply to local executive bodies to choose a polling station no later than December 10, 2020.

If you cannot vote on the election day at the place of registration, you may apply to a local executive body with a written statement on your inclusion into the relevant list of voters no later than December 10.

What if I am at a place of temporary residence?

This issue is solved. There are 558 polling stations in the places of temporary stay of citizens in Kazakhstan. The lists of voters are compiled for these polling stations 5 days before the election and are updated 1 day before the election.

The places of temporary residence of citizens are:

- holiday houses;
- health resorts;
- inpatient facilities;
- places of residence of citizens located in remote and hard-to-reach areas;
- places of distant-pasture cattle rearing;
- custodies and temporary detention facilities;
- vessels that belong to Kazakhstan and are at sea on the election day;

- military units.

I am abroad now. How can I vote?

66 polling stations for the voters from Kazakhstan will be opened in 53 countries of the world. The addresses and contacts of polling stations are published on the official [website](#) of the foreign ministry.

Preliminary lists available on polling stations will be updated until the day of voting. To be included into the list, you should contact the nearest polling station and provide necessary information. These lists shall include all citizens residing or being on a long-term foreign trip in a relevant country and having a valid passport of a citizen of Kazakhstan.

How will the rights of the disabled citizens be implemented?

According to the press service of the ministry of labour and social protection, the disabled citizens will enjoy the environment enabling them to vote in the upcoming elections. The ministry ordered to prepare a set of measures to create an enabling environment – ramps, call buttons, tactile paving, signs, computers and monitors, etc.

In 2018, the norms designed to ensure voting rights to the disabled people were introduced to the constitutional [law](#) “On elections in the Republic of Kazakhstan”. The documents sets forth that a precinct election commission must take necessary measures to implement voting rights for the disabled citizens, and local executive bodies must assist them.

How safety will be ensured amid Covid-19?

According to the recommendations of the health ministry, the generally accepted health measures should be ensured above all:

- mandatory wearing of masks,
- wearing of single-use gloves, use of hand sanitizers;
- keeping social distance between people;

- avoiding handshaking and other forms of direct contact.

Personal pens should be used to complete and sign relevant documents.

How much will it cost to parties to take part in the elections?

Political parties that apply to the CEC for the participation in the election shall pay election fee that is 15 times more than the minimum wage specified by law per each candidate on the party list.

The rate of the minimum wage in Kazakhstan in 2020 is 42,500 tenge (99 dollars), i.e. the election fee for every candidate is 637,500 tenge (1,509 dollars).

The election fee is not payable by political parties that won seven or more per cent of votes at the previous elections - these are Nur Otan, the Democratic Party of Kazakhstan «Ak Zhol», and the People's Party of Kazakhstan.

Other parties will pay, accordingly:

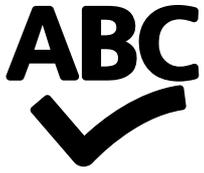
- the People's Democratic Party «Auly» for 19 candidates - 12,112,500 tenge (28,603 dollars),
- party «Adal» for 20 candidates - 12,750,000 tenge (30,108 dollars).

The total amount of election fees is 24,862,500 tenge (58,772 dollars).

How much will it cost to hold the election in total?

The estimated cost of the combined election campaign is 15.3 billion tenge (35 million dollars).

The Central Election Commission states that the combined parliamentary and local elections is the "rational decision on effective use of budget funds." In case of separate campaigns, the estimated cost of the elections would be 25 billion tenge (58 million dollars).



If you have found a spelling error, please, notify us by selecting that text and pressing *Ctrl+Enter*.