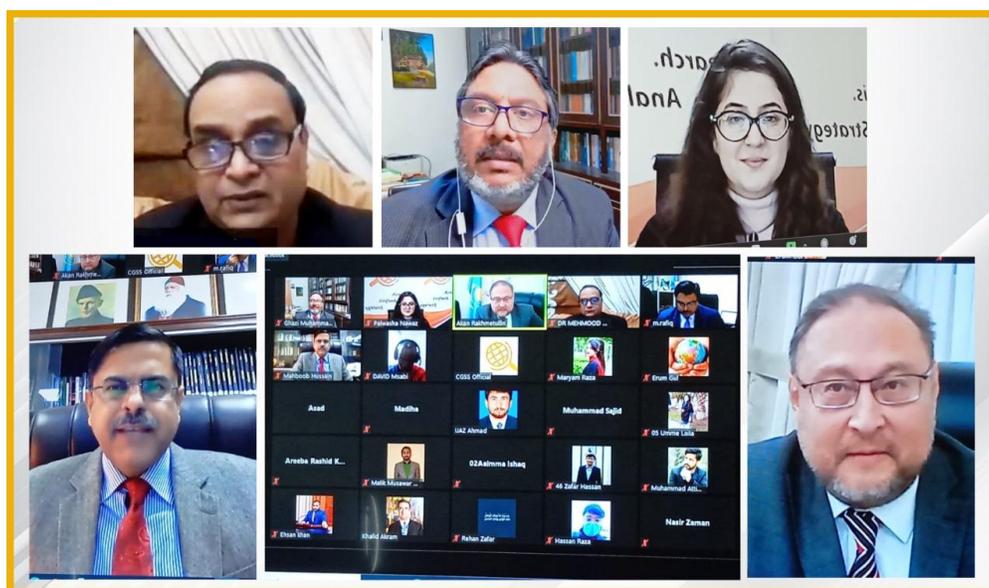




# Online International Conference Report

## “Kazakhstan’s Parliamentary Election 2021: A Way Forward for Further Strengthening Democracy and Political Setup”



Organized by

Center of Global and Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad on  
28<sup>th</sup> December 2020



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## **Brief Overview**

On 28th December 2020 Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad organized an Online Conference on, Kazakhstan's Parliamentary Election 2021: A Way Forward for Further Strengthening Democracy & Political Setup.

The conference aimed to understand the Kazakhstan government's attempts to strengthen fair democratic and political values in the country to give a neutral and unbiased perspective on how such steps will be effective for free and fair parliamentary elections in the country on 10th January 2021.

The Guest Speakers of the Conference included:

- His Excellency Akan Rakhmetullin, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- Dr. Mahboob Hussain, Chairman, Department of History & Pakistan Studies, University of Punjab, Lahore
- Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan, Member Board of Experts, CGSS & Regional Geopolitical Analyst
- Dr. Ghazi M. Abdullah, Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of the Punjab, Lahore

The conference was moderated by Ms. Palwasha Nawaz, Project Executive, CGSS, and was attended by 50 participants including students and members of academia. It was also viewed by 100 people on social media networks.



### **Concept Note**

Like many other Central Asian states, Kazakhstan has also come a long way to establish a cohesive democratic and political environment during the past decades. The announcement of Parliamentary elections in the country by its President Kassim-Jomart Tokayev on 10th January 2021 have provided yet another manifestation of this reality.

Democracy gives an aura of legitimacy in contemporary political field to the States where it is implemented in letter and spirit. The laws, regulations and policies issued under such political setup are rightly justified when they are democratic, because in the modern era, they provided important and generally accepted democratic values to the political setup where they are implemented. Keeping these assertions in mind, the Kazakhstan government has strived to provide a more supportive and pragmatic political setup to its people during the recent years and the upcoming parliamentary elections are yet another example in this regard.

In the last couple of years, Kazakhstan's rise through the ranks of rapidly evolving democratic setups in the world has proved to be a great blessing and opportunity for its people to become a country where the will and ideas of people are protected through democratic values. The Kazakh government has redirected its energies towards addressing grievances rather than crushing dissent. This approach has benefited not only Kazakhstan's populace but also its government, who has boosted social stability and economic competitiveness by addressing human rights and allowing free and fair elections on persistent basis. Since becoming Kazakhstan's President on 20th March 2019, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has tirelessly worked to reform state and government services so they are more responsive to the needs and ambitions of its citizens. Thanks to his vision, the country is now the most economically successful and socially stable country in Central Asia. It is quite difficult to mention all the democratic, social and political reforms under President Tokayev's government because of the far reaching implications and prospects of these reforms for the political and social fabric of Kazakhstan. Under his leadership, the Kazakh society has witnessed a new and exemplary era of democratic and political transformation for their own betterment and prosperity.

## **Profiles of the Speakers**

### **His Excellency Akan Rakhmetullin, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan**



His Excellency Akan Rakhmetullin began his diplomatic career in April 1993 as a Desk Officer and then Attaché in the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. His first diplomatic overseas assignment was as Consul Attaché and then Third Secretary at the Embassy of the Republic

of Kazakhstan in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (1994 to 1996).

After his return to Kazakhstan and service as Third Secretary and Second Secretary in the Consular Department Office of MFA, Mr Rakhmetullin entered the first enrollment to the Diplomatic Academy of the MFA of Kazakhstan, from which he graduated with Honors in 1999. In 2007-2011 he served as Minister-Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the OSCE in Vienna. During Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the OSCE, Mr Rakhmetullin coordinated the work of the environmental and economic issues of the Organization – its second dimension. In 2011 he was appointed Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations in New York.

### **Dr. Mahboob Hussain, Chairman, Department of History & Pakistan Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore**



Dr. Mahboob completed Post-Doctorate Degree from University of Oxford, UK. He completed PhD from University of the Punjab, Lahore in 2013. His fields of specialization are modern political history, institution building, state and society, politics of Pakistan. Supervising Teaching Practice of Approximately 30 Prospective Teachers of Secondary Schools per year from 1997 to 2004. He has various international publications to his credit. He is a Gold Medalist in M.A History. World Bank has also cited his articles in its report about Pakistan. He is Higher Education Commission's

approved supervisor for PhD. He also holds Post-Doctorate Fellowship, awarded by Punjab Higher Education Commission (PHEC), for Oxford University.

**Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan, Member Board of Experts, CGSS & Regional Geopolitical Expert/Analyst**



Dr. Mehmood-Ul-Hassan Khan has degrees in International relations and basic Law too. He completed his M.Phil. leading to Ph.D. in from University of Punjab, Pakistan in Development. He has vast experience in serving different departments of the Federal Government. He has also a rich experience in research, cultural diplomacy, peace and conflict resolution and defence issues. He has been in this profession for more than 26 years. He worked in BBC Asia Network as regional expert on Afghanistan and Middle East in 2004.

He worked as regional expert in USGAM, Turkey and had a great experience while interacting with TRT too. Transparency International UK selected him “peer Viewer” from Pakistan in 2015. His research and comprehensive articles have already been published in China, Uzbekistan, Iran, Turkey, Azerbaijan, USA, South Korea, UAE and Kuwait too. He has great experience in the socio-economic, geo-politics and geo-strategic issues of Central Asia, Caucasus and Middle East. He is a famous expert on CIS and Caucasus in Pakistan.

**Dr. Ghazi M. Abudullah, Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of the Punjab, Lahore**



Dr. Ghazi M. Abudullah worked as Teaching/Research Associate (BPS-17), in the subject of Pakistan Studies, at University of Engineering & Technology, Taxila, November 1999 to 2nd March 2002. He worked as Lecturer in History at the Department of History & Pakistan Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore.

Currently working as Assistant Professor, in History, at the Department of History & Pakistan Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, since 19th December 2010.

Held responsibilities as Students Advisor as In-charge Library Affairs at various intervals between 2002 and 2016 at the Department of History & Pakistan Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore.



## **Executive Summary/ Key Takeaways**

### **1. Kazakhstan's Parliamentary Election 2021:**

- a. Democracy gives an aura of legitimacy in contemporary political field to the states where it is implemented in letter and spirit. The laws, regulations and policies issued under such political setup are rightly justified when they are democratic, because in the modern era, they provide important and generally accepted democratic values to the political setup where they are implemented.
- b. Like many other Central Asian states, Kazakhstan has also come a long way to establish a cohesive democratic and political environment during the past decades. The announcement of Parliamentary elections in the country by its President Kassim-Jomart Tokayev on 10th January 2021 has provided yet another manifestation of this reality
- c. In the last couple of years, Kazakhstan's rise through the ranks of rapidly evolving democratic setups in the world has proved to be a great blessing and opportunity for its people, where the will and ideas of people are protected through democratic norms and values.
- d. This approach has benefited not only Kazakhstan's populace but also, it's government, who has boosted social stability and economic competitiveness by addressing human rights and allowing transparent, free and fair elections on persistent basis.

### **2. Role of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in the process of Political Orientation:**

- a. Since becoming Kazakhstan's President on 20th March 2019, President Kassym-Jomart has tirelessly worked to reform state and government services so they became more responsible to the needs and ambitions of its citizens. Due to his vision, the country is now the most economically successful and socially stable country in Central Asia.
- b. He has introduced the concept of 'listening state', which provides not only considering the views of all the stakeholders in political arena but also actively



engage them into the practical implementation. In this regard, the Kazakh society has witnessed a new and exemplary era of democratic and political transformation for their own betterment and prosperity.

### **3. Election 2021: Kazakhstan's Political and Democratic Setup**

- a.** The Kazakhstan government has strived to provide a more supportive and pragmatic political setup to its people during the recent years and the upcoming parliamentary elections.
- b.** In the upcoming parliamentary election, the determined factors will be the new paradigm of the relations between the state and the society. The new political players and forces would get their chance and share in determining the political landscape of the country.
- c.** In 2021 Mazhilis elections, the lower chamber has introduced number of significant measures such as laws on public rallies which excludes the provision of acquiring official approval, democratization and transparency of electoral systems and procedures.
- d.** The major legislative reforms include the formation of lower-level elections, commissions, water registration reforms and securing representation of women and youth among variety of other amendments.
- e.** This election marks another importance as there is increase in the number of participations by women and the youth up to 30%. This provision will allow an effective mechanism for involving women and youth in parliamentary affairs and local legislative body.
- f.** Upcoming election holds the participation of five parties. Nur Otan is the ruling party and other parties i.e., communist people party, democratic party and industrial party. In this regard, all preparedness of a transparent election has already been institutionalized through good governance, zero corruption, people friendly socio-economic policies, structural reforms, effective judiciary administration and legislation.

#### 4. Key Takeaways:

- a. Nursultan Nazarbayev's Policies: Blessing for the Future Political Discourse for Kazakhstan:
  - He was the president of Kazakh communist party in 1989. After independence, his leadership emerged rapidly. For 25 years he continued to add value in the national politics. He was longest ruling and strongest leader to exercise the power effectively in the political system and economic policy making.
  - Nursultan moved the country towards a positive direction and introduce new reforms. Under his leadership, the Kazakhstan witnessed positive change in the market economy. Thus, in 2010 he was granted 'leader of the nation' status and became ruler for life. His statesmanship, effective socio-economic and political policies are the light for the future political and economic discourse of Kazakhstan.
- b. Kazakhstan is hub of socio-economic prosperity and productivity. It is holding more than 4billion tan of gas & oil reservoirs. The DGP is extracted from agriculture sector is 10%. However, in production of wheat, its ranks at seven number.
- c. The effective incumbent leadership of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, pragmatic constitution, responsive but versatile political parties, vibrant and modern accountable media and various transparent organs of the state are contributing for the free and fair elections of 2021. This will mobilize the society and strengthen the democratic norms in Kazakhstan.
- d. The country is the party of all international conventions. Recently, they have joined the second optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, legally abolishing the capital punishment. In this aspect, the



people of Kazakhstan further expect development in the process from the new Mazhilis as there is always room for further improvement and enhancement.

- e. Kazakhstan's authority would shift peaceful transfer of power from one government to another. With promising features of immense socio-economic development, zero corruption, accountability, transparency, democratization, formation of vast network of small and medium enterprises, supply of microfinancing, agriculture development and to establish direct connection between the state and general masses.

## **Scripts of the Speeches by the Speakers**

### **Speaker 1**

**Dr. Mehboob Hussain, Chairman, Department of History & Pakistan Studies,  
University of the Punjab, Lahore**



First of all, I would like to thank the organizers of the conference. On the behalf of CGSS and Punjab university, I welcome His Excellency Akan Rakhmetullin, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan. I would also say greetings and welcome to all the participants who are listening us from Pakistan and Kazakhstan on this challenging time of pandemic. It is my privilege to be the part of the discussion with the distinguished panelist. Before discussing on the topic, I would like to say about the present-day Pakistan and central Asia. They are two geographical regions which share history of mutual relations, dating back to ancient times. Most of the ruling dynasties of south Asia had their origin in central Asia. During this period, hundreds of Sufis, writers, poets and common people migrated from central Asia to South Asia. Therefore, to contributing significantly in culture, history, art and science it is an importing topic which we are dising today. Legislative elections are scheduled to be done in Kazakhstan on January 2021 to elect the members of the Mazhilis. This election marks the first to be held under incumbent president Kassym Jomart. For the first time in 16 years the parliamentary elections will be held under conditions that strictly made the constitutional requirement. So, this is very important step towards strengthening the institutional building, especially the political institutionalization of Kazakhstan. For the information of our student, I'll mention here that 107 seats of Mazhilis consist of 98 members elected from single nationwide constituency by proportional representation and nine seats elected by the assemble of people. It is a body which is selected by the president. In the upcoming parliamentary election, the determined factors will be the new paradigm of the relations between the state and the society. The presidential election of June 2019, was the first sign that new political players and forces get their share in political landscape of the country. The recent parliamentary history of Kazakhstan, has come a long way to establish a solid and consistent democratic and political environment after her independence. The Kazakhstan's



government has tried to give more supportive and pragmatic political setup to the people of the country during recent years and upcoming parliamentary election is one of the examples of strong democratic setup in the world. In the last couple of years, Kazakhstan rise through the rank of rapidly evolving democratic setup and has proved to be a great blessing and opportunity for its people to become a country where the will and ideas of people is protected by the democratic values. So, I think that the approach has benefited to the government in term to achieve the social stability and economic prosperity. So being a student of history, I must say that politically stable society easily gain economic prosperity. It is good that Kazakhstan is aligning with free and fair elections. The upcoming election for the Mazhilis, the lower chamber of the Kazakhstan's parliament are doing clear improvement in term of representation and legislation changes. These legislative changes include the formation of lower-level elections, commissions, water registration reforms and securing representation of women and youth among variety of other amendments. Here, I would mention that the post-soviet countries had taken a different course and today some of them could be called as non-successful but it is not in the case of Kazakhstan. There are increasingly stabilizing factors in both regionally and globally. So, for upcoming elections numerous reforms were proposed by the new president such as laws on public rallies which excluded provisions requiring official approval and reducing their required number of members in political parties to be registered. So, this is important development in political setup of Kazakhstan. In 2021 Mazhilis election of Kazakhstan introduced a number of measures such as democratization and increasing transparency of electoral systems and procedures. These measures include mandating the legislative, modifications of a parliamentary opposition, a mandate of 30% quota for women and young people on the electoral party list and easing of regulations and restrictions on creation of political party. The election threshold for the political parties were reduced twice from 40 thousand party members to 20 thousand party members. If we compare this Mazhilis election to the previous, they have several key differences. One, for the first time the new players are going to be involved in the political process, who will bring some contribution to the electrical process. I hope that upcoming election will meet the political demands of the Kazaks citizens. Numerically, for upcoming election the proportional model is fully consistent with the



international democratic practices and contribute to strengthen the political system. The development of democracy and facilitating the activities of political parties' and democratic norms and values in Kazakhstan. Second, the changes in the electrical legislation, characterized by the introduction of the parliamentary opposition. I must say here, that here is no concept of a valid democratic system without involvement of opposition. The parliamentary opposition very significantly have taken on board. So, now one chair and two secretaries of the standing comities of the Majlis will be elected among the deputies of the parliamentary opposition. In this way the parliamentary opposition be given the right to initiate the parliamentary hearing at least one during the session as well as to determine the agenda of the government twice in one session. The leaders of the political parties are providing with the right to speak for a joint session of the chamber of parliament, session of the Mazhilis, meeting of the standing committees and working group. Third, for the first time 30% of quota for women and youth is introduced. This provision will come an effective mechanism for involving women and youth in parliament affairs and local legislative body. This will contribute to the social welfare of the society. Four, although the population of Kazakhstan is stressed by significant political aloofness over the past year but there has been a trend of the politization of the society which is a positive change. Thus, the administration of incumbent regime adopted a number of democratic reforms which I have already mentioned. These important steps mobilize the society and strengthen the democratic norms. The people of Kazakhstan further expect development in this process from the new Mazhilis. There is always room for further improvement and enhancement. I hope that Kazakhstan authority would shift peaceful transfer of power from one government to another. It is the interest of any society to demonstrate the higher level of transparency in electrical process. This is all from my side. I hope his excellency, would add some recent development in this regard. Thank you very much

## Speaker 2

### Dr. Ghazi M. Abdullah, Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of the Punjab, Lahore



Thank you very much. The blessing of the Kazakhstan political system is the topic assigned to me. It is very important vis a vis the current political situation in Kazakhstan. Because historically geographically, economically and in the foreign policy paradigm, it is most important country in the central Asian region. It has a lot of potential in the long-term impact on other regional politics and economy. For example, south Asia and on the other hand, Russia. To talk about international politics and diplomacy, we know that its relationship with USA in the context of War of terror and handling of the situation makes its further important in the eyes on many experts. Kazakhstan have many important references of importance so far as the political system is concerned. Historically, it is most vibrant and rich in culture. Its methodology and development as a country is very attractive to many of us. It is in fact, a country which can be compared with western Europe. Its relationship with Russia and adjoining territory is always being very important. Recently, Kazakhstan is emerging as most powerful country with a lot of opportunities for the future. Although Islam is one of the basic religions in these countries, but the orthodox Christianity, has all the accommodation in this country. The policy of the state is very accommodative towards other religious communities. Kazakh is the state language but Russian language is also very important in the official sector mainly in the trade relationship between local traders and mercantile. Now, as per my view in the current situation in last two decades, there are many pros and cons. Firstly, I would like to highlight some of the merits of Kazakhstan present political system. As a student of history, I think it is important to understand those sensitive areas of contextual historical factors which result into the emergence of Kazakhstan as a vibrant state since its independence. One has to understand, that it was the last country in Soviet Union which got independence in 1991. Another important thing is that the Soviets rule in Kazakhstan was the mixed blessing for the country. Russian investment in the country, the nuclear investment and many other projects made it important. At the same time, it created a lot of political and economic conflicts vis a vis the locals and the Soviets. By 1918, there were a lot of powerful voices that



had emerged out of Kazakhstan, particularly within the youth. As a result of that, the protest continued till Gorbachev became president in USSR. In this context, we know the glasnost policy that led to further impetus to the protest. The voice for the rights of the youth and opposition that is one glaring aspect of the Kazakhstan political system. So, we can say that it has its historical heritage. Another important element in Kazakhstan political system is president Nursultan Nazarbayev. His rule is very interesting for me. He was the president of Kazakh communist party in 1989. After independence, his leadership emerged rapidly. I believe that his rise and continuation in the local politics for many decades is very amazing. That 25 years he continued in the national politics. He was most important and strongest one who has all power in the political system, economic policy making and other policies. Even after 2019 with political reforms and other minor changing in existing electoral system his role cannot be shed aside. In fact, behind the political system and existing setup, his rule is a guiding start. So, his presidency is most important pillar of this political system. We know that in traditional democratic setup of the west or USA, the president doesn't get to have more than two terms of presidency but in case of Kazakhstan it is very unique. The continuation made him significant example within the democratic norms but having a local touch. I would like to mention an example here. In 2009, a history professor in Kazakhstan proposed Nursultan presidency as permanent for the life. In his speech he praised him and said that "honorable Nursultan Nazarbayev the people will always vote for you. You always work for the good of the people and the country. We believe that there is no need to hold presidential election in future. You should always lead Kazakhstan and run the country. We must make the appropriate changes to the constitution". Now it is very interesting that even though, the professor has no official standing but the parliament very soon amended the constitution to allow Nursultan to serve for life. I know that many western experts criticize it, but if we look at his rule, the international situation and diversity of political forces in Kazakhstan we have to admit that his rule is over all blessing for the country itself. Let aside the traditional principles of the presidential democracy of the world there are a lot of factors and development projects throughout the history of Nursultan that have moved the country towards a very positive direction. For example, in market economies, exploration of oil & gas and other mineral resources. After 2000, an economic hype was



started in the Kazakhstan. Domestic and foreign affairs held very carefully by Nursultan. Kazakhstan have 14 provinces and all the governance appointment is done by the president directly. It is also one of most important state to produce uranium and other precious minerals. More than 4 billion ton gas and oil reservoirs are there in Kazakhstan. The GDP is extracted from agriculture sector which is 10% but in production of wheat it is among the top ten states. To conclude, I would say that the recent amendments vis a vis the parliaments and so on are positive aspect. The impact of Nursultan will continue because he has been awarded the status of president for life. When we talk about the blessing, I think Nursultan biography is on top. My humble observation is that Kazakhstan political system needs to be improved further. So, more parameters should be checked to accommodate the opposition party and human right situation should be improved. Otherwise, I think the overall political system have demonstrated its vibrancy and potential to handle economic situation and political development. Thank you very much.

### **Speaker 3**

#### **Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan, Member Board of Experts, CGSS & Regional Geopolitical Expert/Analyst**



Thank you very much for inviting me. I would like to answer Dr. Muhammad ghazi of some reservation regarding politicization and democratization process in Kazakhstan. I think there should be more clarity regarding the vibrancy and the development orientation of political system in Kazakhstan. Firstly, it has been the main mantra of all the central Asian countries to focus more on economic growth instead of rigorous politicization or democratization. Examples are there of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The main philosophy of all the Central Asian countries focused on achieving the desire goal of socio-economic development then moving gradually towards the politicization. Other thing is there has been regional integration of CARs to be loyal with the king or the president. For centuries it has been happening and not a new phenomenon. If we talk about the modern prophecies or methodology of liberal modern democratic system, yes, they have their own good things to be projected. Kazakhstan has its own salient feature to be promoted or to be fully understood in order to highlight the real essence of Kazakhstan democracy. In real term, Kazakhstan has its own unique model of democracy based on socio-economic and human development. If we compare Kazakhstan democratic model with the western world, the west has its own salient features but mainly based on capitalization of money and other resources. The Kazakhstan fair and free and transparent elections are the example of modern, liberal and functional democracy in the world. In this regard, all vital actors of Kazakhstan are fully prepared to hold upcoming parliament election to be held on 10 January 2021 in accordance with the international standards. The most vital actors for holding impartial elections mainly include government, political parties, people's participation, chief election commission, vigilant mass media, social media, uncompromised observation of international observer and independent judiciary. Kazakhstan is a democratic



country which implements all the international protocols pertaining to the democratic transitions, traditions and norms in its country. It follows all international norms and obligation to conduct fair and competitive election. In this regard, all preparedness of a transparent election has already been institutionalized through good governance, zero corruption, people friendly socio-economic policies, structural reforms, judiciary administration, legislation and last but not least youth and women empowerment. I would like to highlight that there has been an upward trend in political system of Kazakhstan that the percentage of youth and women have been further increased since the last election. In last year election, the participation was 27% and now it is 30% that shows high literacy rate and empowerment transitions. In this context, I would like to share the vision of the His Excellency, the president of Kazakhstan who by taking the oath promised to introduced an integrated political reform. As my friend Dr. Ghazi has mentioned the role of opposition in a democratic political system, yes, His excellency promised to nourish and further develop the institution of political system in Kazakhstan. According to the chief election commission of Kazakhstan, more than six different political parties will be participating in the upcoming election. The main political party is Nur-Otan which has been dominating because of the long history of politicization and democratization. Every party is enjoying freedom of speech. To talk about the independency and impartiality of chief election commission is pertinent. With the vibrant constitution of Kazakhstan, Chief election commission is the independent organ of state and permanent. It has its own meaningful, interactive and effective players of administration which have been doing great job in holding free and fair election. To hold the election, center election commission has also established an institute of international observer. I fear that due to the pandemic the quantity of international observers may not be up to the international standard but still we can hope that international observers will observe according to the given protocols and policies and will give their independent opinion. Now, I would like to talk briefly about the different agendas and policies of the six political party, participating in the Kazakhstan political system. There are a lot of attractive and articulated political promises that are being made in the ongoing campaign. The main promises made by all parties are: immense socio-economic development, zero corruption, accountability, democratization, formation of vast network of small and medium enterprises,



supply of microfinancing, agriculture development and to establish direct connection between the state and general masses. Kazakhstan is real hub of socio-economic prosperity and productivity. It is the easiest and smoothest way of power sharing. It provides political stability, economic sustainability, stand for political wisdom and hopes for the betterment. Now, let's talk about some perpetual blackmailing of European international observers, mass media and organization like OSCE, office of democratic institute and human rights (ODIHR), freedom house and heritage organization. Being prominent regional expert on Kazakhstan, I strongly reject the biased notion because this leads towards political chaos, instability and disintegration of society and social norms. Take the example of Kyrgyzstan ongoing political saga and clean political transformation of so many African countries, all speak strategic importance of gradual journey towards achieving real goal of politicization and democratization. Thus, the European Union, international organization and other observer claims have no substance. Western media has always showed great resentment towards Kazakhstan chief election commission measures to ban any livestreaming of social media blogger including international observer on the day of election. To conclude, I would say that the pragmatic constitution of Kazakhstan, its responsive but versatile political parties, vibrant and modern accountable media and various transparent organs of the state, all are accounting for the free and fair parliament election of 2021. Thank you very much.

#### **Speaker 4**

#### **His Excellency Akan Rakhmetullin, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan**



Thank you very much. First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our partner CGSS to help us in organizing this event. Which is very important for both countries and those who are attending this conference. Secondly, I would like to thank all speakers for their interesting views, input and observations. Honestly, I am astonished about the knowledge they have of Kazakhstan and the latest development. It seems that being historians and professors, they have much deeper and wider knowledge about our country. They comprehensively explained everything. They have mentioned in detail about the electoral parties, the numbers and the creation of the institute. For Kazakhstan this is new phenomena and we hope that it would help us to raise the competitiveness and the responsibility of all parties involved in the political process who are willing to get elected into parliament or their role in further construction of political and democratic process. I would also praise that you have mentioned our increasing role given to youth and women. According to our constitution the age of eligibility of young people to become member of Mazhilis is 25 but in practice it never was the case. Now, there would be particular attention to provide this proportion of 30% to ensure the voices of women and youth to be heard and implemented. I also wanted to add to the recent introduced by our president Kassim Jomart, the concept of listening states. Which provides not only considering the views of all the stakeholder on political thing in Kazakhstan but also actively taking them into account and bring them into practical implementation. Professor Mehmood mentioned about six political parties. I would like to inform about latest development now there are five political parties. The six one which was social democratic party, has withdrawn from the election. Now, the election competition is among five parties. The ruling party Nur Otan and then the number of various parties like communist people party, democratic party and industrial party. Also, uniqueness of this parliament election would be that there would be held amid COVID-19 pandemic. The health safety of the citizen is the main priority of the government. The entire electoral process



would be conducted with all the SOPs to ensure the protection of all the people involved. All the experts gave deep analysis the political process. You have different feelings about what is going on in Kazakhstan. I won't say they are polarized but they are quite interesting because political process anywhere is not a perfect and static thing. It's a dynamic and developing thing. We are relevantly young country. In case of human life, we are just entering in the mature period. Of course, we have many commitments and requirement from international community and western society to be more democratic and transparent. But democracy cannot be constructed overnight. Even in western democracies, they are still facing some issues after the electoral process. I would like to assure you that in Kazakhstan, we are sensitive about further development of our political system and making it more open, transparent and more able to be listening and hearing. We are parties of all international conventions. Recently, we have joined the second optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, legally abolishing the capital punishment. So, step by step we are coming towards our new formation. I would thank Professor Mehboob Hussain who said that it is a new paradigm in the political system in which government and population are becoming the partners and mutually listening, hearing and respecting each other. You all have made so very value and interesting observations. I hope that after his elections. We will again gain the support of CGSS and try to conduct another online conference to share with you the outcomes of these election and to hear your perspective and forecast in the new political fabric and the future development. I thank all of you and also congratulate all Pakistani brothers on the Quaid-e-Azam day whom we consider as the leader of the nation and who we pay great tribute and respect. Pakistan is very brotherly country to us. Many of you may know that Pakistan was number four country to recognize our independence. I think we have to keep high spirit of partnership, friendship and brotherhood in future. Thank you again and wish you all good health, prosperity and wellbeing.