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**Language**

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The Presidential election in 2003 confirmed Ilham Aliyev, son of President Heydar Aliyev (former First Secretary of the Azerbaijan Communist Party) as successor to his father. This election was criticized by the OSCE, but accepted internationally, and left the electorate disillusioned when the parliamentary elections took place in 2005. So only 50% of the electorate voted.

However campaigners (inspired by Georgia and later Ukraine) had been trying since 2003, when they organized minor protests, to promote popular resistance to electoral fraud and repression. The opposition gained unity in 2005 and the opposition Azadlig bloc ran 115 candidates and tried with public demonstrations to launch their own 'orange revolution'. The OSCE and Council of Europe condemned human rights abuses and government manipulation of the elections, but western diplomats encouraged the opposition to limit their protests to the courts and authorized rallies, although even authorized demonstrations attracted repressive measures.

Alieva, Leila, [Azerbaijan's frustrating elections](#) [1], Journal of Democracy, Vol. 17, issue 2 (April), 2006, pp. 147-160

Analysis of background and context of elections, the regime's role and actions of the opposition.

Bunce, Valerie J. ; Wolchik, Sharon L., [Azerbaijan's 2005 Parliamentary Elections: A Failed Attempt at Transition](#) [2], Working Paper No 89, September, Stanford CA, Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law (Stanford University), 2008, pp. 52

See also Bunce; Wolchik, [Defeating Authoritarian Leaders in Post-Communist Countries](#) [3] ([D. II.1. Comparative Assessments](#) [4]) , pp. 178-90.

Valiyev, Anar M., [Parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan: A failed revolution](#) [5], Problems of Post-Communism, Vol. 53, issue 3 (May/June), 2006, pp. 17-35

Argues that despite violence used against opposition and shattered hopes, the protests promoted increased political participation.

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