



South Korea General Elections: People Voice for Democracy through the Ballot

April 15, 2016

On April 13, 2016, the people of South Korea exercised their suffrage to democratically elect their respective representatives in parliament. Despite a long time hold as the majority party in the National Assembly, the ruling party suffered a surprise defeat when it took only 122 of the 300 seats.

The voter turnout reached 58%, an all-time high compared to the two previous elections. Concerned with increasing corruption and the deteriorating economy, human rights, and democracy the South Korean people exercised their right to address these issues through the power of the vote.

Overall, the elections in South Korea can be assessed to be free and fair. However, there are continuous concerns of the restrictions of freedom of speech and the use of digital space. During the election campaign period, there were reports of pressure on the freedom of speech online in regards to candidates.

Despite the restrictions, South Korean civil society organizations, including ADN members in South Korea, created the Civic Elections Coalition to carry out a campaign to provide comprehensive information on candidates and political parties as well as monitor the election process.

The Asia Democracy Network congratulates the people of South Korea in exercising the values and principles of democracy through free and fair elections. The people have voiced their opinions and it has been heard.

Democratic victories such as the elections in Sri Lanka (January 8, 2015), Myanmar (November 8, 2015), Taiwan (January 16, 2016), and now South Korea (April 13, 2016), we look forward to witnessing the strength of the people power movement. We hope that this trend of democratic victory will continue through the elections of the Philippines (May 9, 2016) and Mongolia (June 29, 2016).

For the Philippines, as this year is the 30th Anniversary of the People Power movement, we are confident that the spirit of people power come alive again and produce a democratic victory during the elections to be held in May.