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# **Elections in Afghanistan**

## *June 14 Presidential Runoff Election*

Frequently Asked Questions

Europe and Asia

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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# Frequently Asked Questions

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*Disclosure:*

*These FAQs reflect decisions made by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, to the best of our knowledge as of June 12, 2014. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.*

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## When is Election Day for the presidential runoff? What is the official electoral timeline?

The presidential runoff election is scheduled for June 14, 2014.

The Independent Election Commission has announced an updated schedule for the runoff electoral process, which includes the following key dates:

- May 22: Launch of the runoff campaign period
- June 11: End of the runoff campaign period
- June 12-13: 48 hour silent period, in which no campaigning is permitted
- June 14: Election Day
- June 14-16: 48-hour registration period for complaints regarding polling and counting
- June 14-28: Vote counting and tabulation
- July 2: Announcement of preliminary results
- July 3-4: 24-hour registration period for complaints regarding preliminary results
- July 16: Final decisions regarding electoral complaints
- July 22: Announcement of the final, certified results of the runoff election

In the first round of the elections, citizens also voted for members of the country's 34 Provincial Councils—currently the only elected, official subnational governing body in Afghanistan. Final results for the provincial council elections are now expected to be announced after the presidential runoff election.

## Who are citizens voting for in the presidential runoff election? Why is a runoff election required?

Citizens will vote for the next President of Afghanistan in the final round of elections for what is expected to be the country's first democratic transition of power between heads of state. According to the Constitution<sup>1</sup> and Election Law of Afghanistan, if no presidential candidate receives 50 percent plus one of the votes in the first round, a runoff election must be held between the two candidates receiving the greatest number of votes. According to the final results from the first round of the presidential election, as published by the Independent Election Commission, the two candidates who qualify for the runoff are:<sup>2</sup>

- Dr. Abdullah Abdullah (45% of first round votes)
- Dr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai (31.56%)

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<sup>1</sup> Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. *The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan*. Chapter 3, Article 61. (Ratified on January 26, 2004). Unofficial English translation. Accessed online on June 3, 2014, at <http://www.embassyofafghanistan.org/page/constitution>.

<sup>2</sup> Candidate names are listed here according to the percentage of votes received in the first round of the election, not in the order listed in the ballot. Final results from the first round of the elections are available online at <http://results.iec.org.af/>.

Voters are entitled to vote for either of the candidates competing in the runoff, regardless of whom they supported (or whether they participated) in the first round. The remaining six candidates from the first round of the presidential elections will not directly compete in the second round, although several have declared their support for one of the two frontrunners. The eliminated candidates, in order of votes received in the first round, are:

- Dr. Zalmay Rassoul (11.37%)
- Abdul Rab Rassoul Sayyaf (7.04%)
- Qutbuddin Hilal (2.75%)
- Gul Agha Sherzai (1.57%)
- Mohammad Daud Sultanzoy (0.46%)
- Hedayat Amin Arsala (0.23%)

## **What was the voter turnout in the first round of elections?**

According to the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan (IEC), the total number of voters in the first round of 2014 elections was 6,892,816, of which 36% were females and 64% were males.<sup>3</sup> Given the estimate of 12 million eligible voters announced by the IEC spokesperson in February 2014,<sup>4</sup> this represents an estimated voter turnout of approximately 57.5%.

## **What is the term of office for the President?**

The President of Afghanistan is elected for a five-year term and is limited to serving two terms in office, as stated in the Constitution and Election Law. Current President Hamid Karzai has served two terms and, as such, is not eligible for re-election. The Afghan leader's term was constitutionally mandated to end on May 22, 2014 (the first day of *Jowza* in the Afghan calendar). According to a precedent established by the Supreme Court of Afghanistan in the previous presidential election, President Karzai will remain in power until the next President is sworn in.<sup>5</sup> According to the constitutionally mandated schedule, the next presidential election in Afghanistan is expected in 2019.

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<sup>3</sup> "Preliminary Results of 2014 Presidential Election." (April 26, 2014). Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan. Accessed online at <http://iec.org.af/media-section/press-releases/357-preliminary>

<sup>4</sup> Azadi Radio. February 09, 2014. "نور: حدود 12 میلیون واجد شرایط رای دهی در انتخابات اند" [Noor: Approximately 12 Million Are Eligible to Vote.] Voice of America. Accessed online on June 12, 2014, at [http://da.azadiradio.org/archive/local\\_news/20140209/1090/2118.html?id=25257787](http://da.azadiradio.org/archive/local_news/20140209/1090/2118.html?id=25257787). Translation available from the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan at <http://unama.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?ctl=Details&tabid=12329&mid=15870&ItemID=37694>.

<sup>5</sup> Farangis Najibullah. (March 30, 2009). "Karzai's Opponents Slam Supreme Court Ruling As 'Unconstitutional'". *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*. Accessed online on June 6, 2014, at [http://www.rferl.org/content/Karzais\\_Opponents\\_Slam\\_Supreme\\_Court\\_Ruling\\_As\\_Unconstitutional\\_/1564465.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Karzais_Opponents_Slam_Supreme_Court_Ruling_As_Unconstitutional_/1564465.html).

## Who can vote in Afghanistan?

All citizens of Afghanistan who are 18 or older on Election Day, registered to vote and “have not been deprived of civil rights by law or an authorized court” are eligible to vote.<sup>6</sup>

## How many registered voters are there?

As of June 3, 2014, a total of 20,845,988 voter registrations have been issued in Afghanistan since 2003, according to official data published by the Independent Election Commission (IEC).<sup>7,8</sup> This includes 3,685,442 voters that registered during an IEC voter registration update campaign, which began in May 2013 and ended two weeks before Election Day. Of these newly registered voters, IEC statistics show that 1,263,962 (34%) are women. No further voter registration is scheduled to take place in advance of the runoff election.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the high number of voter registrations from multiple voter registration drives undertaken since 2003, the IEC has announced that, based on information from the Central Statistical Organization of Afghanistan, the estimated number of eligible voters is approximately 12 million.<sup>10</sup>

## What is the structure of Afghanistan’s government?

The government has three branches: executive, legislative and judicial.

The executive branch consists of the Office of President, who is both head of State and the head of government. President Hamid Karzai currently holds this office. The executive branch also includes a first and second Vice President, 26 Cabinet ministers, the National Security Council and other government agencies.

The legislature of Afghanistan is a bicameral National Assembly (*Jirga*) consisting of the House of Elders (*Meshrano Jirga*), with 102 seats, and the House of the People (*Wolesi Jirga*), with 249 seats. Each of the country’s 34 provinces has a provincial council. The number of members in each council can range from nine to 33 depending on the size of the province. One member from each provincial council is also selected as a representative to the *Meshrano Jirga*.

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<sup>6</sup> Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. “Election Law.” Article 12. (Ratified on July 20, 2013.) Unofficial English translation. [http://iec.org.af/pdf/legalframework/law/electorallaw\\_eng.pdf](http://iec.org.af/pdf/legalframework/law/electorallaw_eng.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan. “Voter Registration.” Accessed online on June 3, 2014, at <http://iec.org.af/2012-05-31-16-45-49/voter-registration>

<sup>8</sup> Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan. “End of Voter Registration Process.” Accessed online on June 3, 2014, at <http://iec.org.af/media-section/press-releases/324-end-vr-process>

<sup>9</sup> Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan. “Frequently Asked Questions: Run-Off Election.” Accessed online on June 3, 2014, at [http://iec.org.af/pdf/factsheets-014/eng/faq\\_run\\_off\\_eng.pdf](http://iec.org.af/pdf/factsheets-014/eng/faq_run_off_eng.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Azadi Radio. February 09, 2014. “نور: حدود 12 میلیون واجد شرایط رای دهی در انتخابات اند” [Noor: Approximately 12 Million Are Eligible to Vote.] Voice of America. Accessed online on June 12, 2014, at [http://da.azadiradio.org/archive/local\\_news/20140209/1090/2118.html?id=25257787](http://da.azadiradio.org/archive/local_news/20140209/1090/2118.html?id=25257787). Translation available from the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan at <http://unama.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?ctl=Details&tabid=12329&mid=15870&ItemID=37694>.

The judicial branch consists of the Supreme Court (*Stera Mahkama*), Courts of Appeals and “Primary Courts.” Supreme Court judges are appointed by the President and approved by the *Wolesi Jirga*, while judges for the lower courts are proposed by the Supreme Court and approved by the President.

## **What is the electoral system for presidential elections in Afghanistan?**

The President of Afghanistan is elected by an absolute majority vote, using a two-round system. If no presidential candidate receives more than 50 percent of the vote in the first round, a subsequent runoff election is held between the two candidates who received the largest percentage of votes in the first round.

## **What is the gender balance within the candidate list? Are there reserved seats for women?**

There is no reservation in Afghanistan’s Election Law for female presidential candidates. In the first round of the presidential elections, three out of eight presidential candidates included a female candidate for Second Vice President on their ticket. However, neither of the two presidential candidates participating in the runoff election has a female candidate on their ticket.

## **What is the election management body? What are its powers?**

The Independent Election Commission (IEC) is the election management body of Afghanistan. Its responsibilities and authorities, as established in the 2013 Structure Law, include:

- Managing voter registration
- Certifying the final lists of candidates and voters
- Establishing the calendar for the electoral cycle
- Developing and implementing the budget and operational plans for elections
- Recruiting and training electoral officials and staff
- Conducting voter education and public outreach
- Accrediting domestic and international election observers and monitors
- Establishing voter registration centers, polling centers and stations, and counting stations
- Implementing elections on Election Day
- Announcing preliminary election results as well as certifying the final results following the completion of adjudication by the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission

The IEC has offices in all 34 provinces, and is administered at a local level by District Field Coordinators and Polling Station Committees.

## **How are election officials selected?**

New procedures for selecting and appointing election officials were established in the 2013 Structure Law, which provides for a more transparent process. Under the new legal framework, the President is

given a shortlist of candidates prepared by a selection committee. This committee is made up of National Assembly Chairpersons, the heads of two oversight commissions,<sup>11</sup> the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and one representative selected from elections-focused civil society organizations. The president appoints nine Independent Election Commissioners, at least two of whom must be female, and five Independent Electoral Complaints Commissioners, at least one of whom must be female.

Commissioners are appointed to six-year terms and are immune from prosecution regarding their work, barring flagrant public offences. The Independent Election Commission and Independent Electoral Complaints Commission are responsible for recruiting and training central and provincial staff members. Each commission is supported by a Secretariat, which is responsible for legal, financial, administrative, training, public outreach and operational work of its respective commission.

## **What is the legal framework for the election?**

The election is being administered under the legal framework of two electoral laws passed by Parliament and signed by President Karzai in July 2013 – the Election Law and the Structure Law.

The Election Law details:

- Qualifications and obligations for voters and election observers
- Qualifications and obligations for candidates in presidential and mayoral elections, as well candidates for the National Assembly and provincial, district and village councils
- Size and composition of the legislative bodies noted above
- Electoral systems and constituencies for each type of election
- Rules for allocating seats to female candidates
- Basic frameworks for the voter list, electoral calendar and campaign schedule
- Authorities of the Independent Election Commission (IEC), Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) and Media Commission
- Guidelines for vote counting and results certification as well as electoral security, integrity and dispute resolution

The Structure Law details:

- The structure, duties and authorities of the IEC and IECC
- Qualifications and appointment procedure for IEC and IECC Commissioners
- Immunity from prosecution, barring gross negligence, and grounds for dismissal
- Rules for recruitment of Secretariat staff and application of civil service regulations

This marks the first time that an election in Afghanistan has been conducted under a legal framework established by the legislative process rather than presidential decree. It also marks the first election in which the IEC and IECC are both permanent, standing electoral management bodies, giving particular importance to precedents established in this electoral cycle.

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<sup>11</sup> Specifically, the Independent Commission for Oversight of the Implementation of the Constitution and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission



## **What is a polling center? What is a polling station?**

According to the 2013 Election Law, a polling center is “[a] venue envisaged by the [Independent Election] Commission for the polling purpose, which comprises multiple stations.”<sup>12</sup> A polling station is “[a] place related to a polling center determined for the exercise of the right to vote.” For example, a polling center might be a school, while a polling station would be a classroom within the school.

Due to limitations of the voter registration system, voters are permitted to vote for President at any polling station in the country and for provincial council candidates at any polling station in their province of residence. In Afghanistan, to accommodate prevailing gender norms, separate polling stations are established for women and men to vote.

## **How many polling centers and stations will be set up for the runoff election? When will polling centers be open?**

In the first round of the elections, 6,218 polling centers were open on Election Day,<sup>13</sup> encompassing 20,773 polling stations.<sup>14</sup> Before and on Election Day, approximately 955 (13.3%) of the 7,173 originally planned polling centers were closed due to security reasons.

In response to ballot shortages at some stations in the first round, the Independent Election Commission (IEC) has announced that it will prepare additional polling stations in affected areas. On June 10, following the results of a security review, the IEC announced that the final plan for the runoff election includes 6,365 polling centers that encompass 23,136 polling stations.<sup>15</sup> 9,324 of these polling stations (40.3%) will be reserved exclusively for female voters and will be staffed by female poll workers and security personnel.

Queues at polling centers will be open between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m.; voters already in the queue at 4 p.m. will be permitted to vote.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. “Election Law.” (Ratified on July 20, 2013.) Unofficial English translation. [http://iec.org.af/pdf/legalframework/law/electorallaw\\_eng.pdf](http://iec.org.af/pdf/legalframework/law/electorallaw_eng.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan. April 13, 2014. “Announcement of Partial Results of 2014 Presidential Election.” Accessed online on June 11, 2014, at <http://iec.org.af/media-section/press-releases/332-partial-results>.

<sup>14</sup> Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan. “Frequently Asked Questions: Additional Polling Stations to Accommodate the Run-off Election.” Accessed online on June 3, 2014, at [http://iec.org.af/pdf/factsheets-014/eng/faq\\_runoff\\_pc\\_added.pdf](http://iec.org.af/pdf/factsheets-014/eng/faq_runoff_pc_added.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan. June 10, 2014. “IEC Releases Final List of Polling Centers and Polling Stations for Run-Off Election.” Accessed online on June 11, 2014, at <http://iec.org.af/media-section/press-releases/382-runoff-pc>.

<sup>16</sup> Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan. 2014. “Run-Off: Updated Polling and Counting Procedures.” Accessed online on June 3, 2014, at [http://iec.org.af/pdf/legalframework/2013-procedures/run\\_off\\_polling\\_counting\\_procedure\\_eng.pdf](http://iec.org.af/pdf/legalframework/2013-procedures/run_off_polling_counting_procedure_eng.pdf)

## **What contingency plans has the electoral management body prepared for ballot shortages?**

According to the Independent Election Commission (IEC), in addition to the extra 2,540 polling stations planned for areas affected by shortages in the first round, a full set of voting materials for a further 1,687 polling stations will be on hand as a contingency measure in case of ballot shortages.<sup>17</sup> This is the equivalent of 5 percent of the total, distributed between provincial IEC offices and IEC headquarters. These contingency materials will be on hand to resupply any polling centers that experience a ballot shortage in the runoff election.

## **Is out-of-country voting allowed?**

The 2013 Election Law states that voting is a right for Afghan refugees and diplomatic personnel living outside the country. In the past, voting centers for refugees were established in Pakistan and Iran, which enabled displaced Afghan citizens to cast their ballots.<sup>18</sup> For the 2014 elections, however, the Independent Election Commission has announced that this service will not be available due to financial and logistical constraints.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, there will be no out-of-country voting for the runoff election.

## **How will voters with disabilities and voters with special needs cast their ballots?**

Voters with disabilities in Afghanistan are permitted to cast their ballots with the assistance of a trusted friend or family member, or with the assistance of a polling station Chairperson. As a fraud deterrent measure, only polling station Chairpersons are permitted to assist more than one person. Although Afghanistan has ratified the Convention and Optional Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, further practical measures supporting electoral access for persons with disabilities currently remain limited.<sup>20</sup>

Voters from nomadic tribal groups that have no permanent place of residence, known as Kuchis, are permitted to cast a ballot in any province. Mobile voting teams are also being deployed to voters who are confined to hospitals as well as qualified voters who are imprisoned.

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<sup>17</sup> Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan. "Frequently Asked Questions: Additional Polling Stations to Accommodate the Run-off Election." Accessed online on June 3, 2014, at [http://iec.org.af/pdf/factsheets-014/eng/faq\\_runoff\\_pc\\_added.pdf](http://iec.org.af/pdf/factsheets-014/eng/faq_runoff_pc_added.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> Ben Goldsmith. (n.d.) "Out-of-Country Voting in Post-Conflict Elections." ACE Electoral Knowledge Network. <http://aceproject.org/today/feature-articles/out-of-country-voting-in-post-conflict-elections>.

<sup>19</sup> Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan. "Frequently Asked Questions: Voting in the 2014 Elections." Accessed online on June 3, 2014, at [http://iec.org.af/pdf/factsheets-014/eng/faq\\_voting.pdf](http://iec.org.af/pdf/factsheets-014/eng/faq_voting.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> National Democratic Institute. "The 2010 Wolesi Jirga Elections in Afghanistan." <http://www.ndi.org/files/Afghanistan-2010-election-observers-final-report.pdf>.

## **What technology is being used?**

The Independent Election Commission (IEC), with support from the United Nations, now uses an online system to track the movements and identify details of sensitive materials. Barcoded ballots and sealed tamper-evident bags are intended to secure the integrity of results data transmission, as results are conveyed physically from polling stations through provincial centers to the capital.

At the National Tally Center, results are tabulated and aggregated using software that automatically crosschecks mathematical consistency of entries, which are entered twice by two separate staff members. The system will not accept inconsistent information.<sup>21</sup> The IEC plans to publish results forms, once cleared, on its website for public scrutiny. The IEC and Independent Electoral Complaints Commission are both required by law to publish their procedures, regulations and decisions on their respective websites, providing the public with greater access to information.

## **Is the election management body using a media center?**

The Independent Election Commission (IEC) has an on-site media center and a five-member Media Commission—temporarily established in 2013 for these elections. A Media Commission is required by the 2013 Election Law.<sup>22</sup> The Media Commission is responsible for creating and overseeing regulations for media coverage of the elections. The Election Law establishes that the Media Commission will adjudicate complaints and impose sanctions specifically related to media misconduct.

## **Where are vote counting and tabulation held?**

After polling stations close on Election Day, ballot counting is required to begin immediately, at the polling station, under the supervision of the polling center Chairperson. Accredited observers and candidate representatives are authorized to observe the process of counting, recording and securing the ballots and other sensitive material in tamper-evident containers. The ballots are required to depart for the provincial center by the following day, with several days required for transportation in some remote locations. Results forms are conveyed from provincial centers to the Independent Election Commission's National Tally Center in Kabul, where data entry, tabulation and auditing take place.<sup>23</sup>

## **Who will observe during Election Day? How can they get accreditation?**

The Free and Fair Elections Foundation of Afghanistan (FEFA), the Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan and Democracy Watch Afghanistan are among the many Afghan organizations accredited as

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<sup>21</sup> ACE Electoral Knowledge Network. (n.d.) "Afghanistan: Results Management System." [http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/vc/vcy/cvy\\_af](http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/vc/vcy/cvy_af).

<sup>22</sup> Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). (January 23, 2014). "Presidential and Provincial Council Elections, 5 April 2014: OSCE/ODIHR Exploratory Team Report." Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Warsaw, Poland. Accessed online on March 24, 2014, at <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/110503>.

<sup>23</sup> ACE Electoral Knowledge Network. "Afghanistan: Results Management System." [http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/vc/vcy/cvy\\_af](http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/vc/vcy/cvy_af).

observers for the upcoming elections. Representatives of political parties and candidates can also be accredited as observers. Eight international organizations are accredited to conduct official observation missions, although their participation is expected to be contingent on the security situation. According to the Independent Election Commission, a total of 363,780 observers were accredited for the first round of the elections.<sup>24</sup>

All official observers are required to apply for and attain accreditation from the Independent Election Commission (IEC). The IEC has announced that all media, international and civil society observers accredited for the first round will retain their accreditation for the runoff. Only candidate agents representing the two frontrunner presidential candidates will be accredited for the second round, however; agents for other presidential and provincial council candidates will no longer retain their accreditation. (In the first round, the vast majority of observers accredited by the IEC—approximately 90%—were affiliated with specific candidates, predominantly for provincial council candidates.) To this end, the IEC website states that each candidate participating in the runoff can nominate up to 25,000 observers for accreditation.<sup>25</sup>

The 2013 Election Law provides that observers have the right to be present at polling and counting centers; to publish reports; and to access information regarding the electoral process.

## **How are election disputes being adjudicated?**

The Independent Electoral Complaints Commission of Afghanistan (IECC) has responsibility for adjudicating all electoral disputes, including challenges regarding the preliminary list of candidates; the conduct of campaigns; and alleged fraud and malpractice during the voting and counting period. The 2013 Structure Law established the IECC as a permanent institution, headed by five Commissioners and supported by a Secretariat.

The 34 provincial IECCs have primary jurisdiction to address alleged violations of election laws. Each provincial IECC has a secretariat with legal, financial and administrative staff to assist in processing complaints. In exceptional circumstances, the central IECC may decide as the primary authority. The law provides for a right to appeal to the central IECC against provincial IECC decisions.

Complaints on the voting and counting process can be filed within 48 hours after Election Day.<sup>26,27</sup> Formal complaints are filled out on an IECC complaints form, which may be filed at the relevant provincial IECC offices or at central IECC, and—on Election Day—at polling centers and stations. Any person who has full legal competence may file a complaint or challenge, either in person or through a legally authorized representative.

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<sup>24</sup> Abdullah Ahmadzai. “Impartiality Critical to Ensuring Afghanistan’s Election Credibility.”

<sup>25</sup> Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan. “Frequently Asked Questions: Run-Off Election.” Accessed online on June 3, 2014, at [http://iec.org.af/pdf/factsheets-014/eng/faq\\_run\\_off\\_eng.pdf](http://iec.org.af/pdf/factsheets-014/eng/faq_run_off_eng.pdf). (Although some sources state that each candidate will receive 35,000 observer credentials, 25,000 is the number cited on the IEC website.)

<sup>26</sup> Independent Electoral Complaints Commission of Afghanistan. “Procedure on Filing and Adjudicating Electoral Challenges and Complaints.” (Approved on February 4, 2014).

<sup>27</sup> The Independent Electoral Complaints Commission of Afghanistan procedure on filing and adjudication does not establish deadlines for complaints related to campaign or preliminary results.

The legal department at the commission with primary jurisdiction receives, registers, categorizes and conducts an initial assessment of the complaint and related evidence, followed by formal legal opinion by a senior lawyer, before a recommendation is drafted and submitted to the Commissioners. The complaints are prioritized by urgency and importance, and then assessed and ruled upon by the central or provincial IECC, as appropriate. Decisions are made based on the vote of a majority of the IECC Commissioners present at the meeting and, in the case of a tie, according to the decision of the IECC Chairperson.

The newly adopted 2013 Structure Law, as well as IECC procedures, provide for IECC meetings on complaints adjudication to be open. It allows representatives of the media, civil society, media groups, political parties and observers to participate. IECC decisions, as defined by the 2013 Election Law, are “final and applicable” and the 2013 Structure Law states, “announcement of the final election results that takes place based on the decision of the Complaints Commission shall be unchangeable.” According to the updated electoral schedule, the IECC is scheduled to make final decisions by July 16, with final results scheduled to be announced on July 22.

## **What provisions have been made to address allegations of irregularities in the first round of elections?**

The Independent Election Commission (IEC) has publically announced that more than 3,300 (out of approximately 82,000) poll workers have been implicated in “acts of fraud or irregularities” during the first round and blacklisted from employment for the second round and any future elections.<sup>28</sup> A further 440 poll workers will not be rehired due to poor performance.<sup>29</sup>

The IEC and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission have conducted separate and joint lessons-learned workshops to examine ways to improve processes and further mitigate irregularities in the second round. Each commission has also held additional training sessions for staff to strengthen understanding of electoral laws, procedures and regulations.

The IEC Media Commission has sanctioned media outlets found to have violated campaign coverage regulations during the first round.<sup>30</sup> Finally, on June 2, President Karzai issued two decrees designed to preempt electoral irregularities in the second round, emphasizing that government and security officials that interfere with the electoral process are to be brought to justice.

## **What security preparations have been made for the elections?**

The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have primary responsibility for security throughout the electoral cycle. ANSF encompasses the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. The government of Afghanistan has also established coordinating bodies at the provincial level with the goal

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<sup>28</sup> Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan. “Frequently Asked Questions: Run-Off Election.” Accessed online on June 3, 2014, at [http://iec.org.af/pdf/factsheets-014/eng/faq\\_run\\_off\\_eng.pdf](http://iec.org.af/pdf/factsheets-014/eng/faq_run_off_eng.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> National Democratic Institute. June 5, 2014. “Afghanistan 2014 Election Update.” Accessed online on June 11, 2014, at <https://www.ndi.org/files/AFG-2014-Election-MissionUpdate-June-5%20.pdf>.

of more effective security coverage. Each voter is to be searched by a security personnel member of their gender before being permitted to enter a polling station, and no unauthorized weapon is permitted within 500 meters of a polling station. According to the Afghan Ministry of Defense, approximately 195,000 ANSF personnel were deployed for electoral security in the first round. At the time of publication, official deployment plans for the runoff have not been publically announced.<sup>31</sup> An updated official review of electoral security also informed the final list of polling centers open on Election Day.

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<sup>31</sup> *Tolo News*. Rafi Sideqi. April 2, 2014. "195,000 ANSF Deployed to Polling Centers: MoD." Accessed online on June 3, 2014, at <http://www.tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/14427-195000-ansf-deployed-to-polling-centers-mod>

## Resources

- Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan ([English](#), [Dari](#), [Pashtu](#))
- Independent Electoral Complaints Commission of Afghanistan ([English](#), [Dari](#), [Pashtu](#))
- The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan ([English](#))
- Election Law ([English](#))
- Law on the Structure, Duties and Authorities of the Independent Election Commission and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission ([English](#))
- IFES — Elections in Afghanistan: April 5 Presidential and Provincial Council Elections ([English](#)) ([Dari](#))
- ElectionGuide.org: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Election for President ([English](#))
- IFES Afghanistan ([English](#))
- IFES Begins Two New Complementary Programs in Afghanistan ([English](#))
- IFES Afghanistan: Handbook for Women’s Rights Advocates ([English](#))