

17 Sept 2010: 1 day to E-Day

Afghanistan *Wolesi Jirga* Elections, 18 Sept 2010

For the 2010 Afghan *Wolesi Jirga* elections, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) is conducting an observation mission and analyzing the electoral process before, during and after election day. This mission involves more than 160 international analysts and Afghan observers throughout the country. For more information, visit NDI.org and AfghanistanElectionData.org.

Afghanistan prepares to vote Poll workers trained nationwide and election materials distributed

Staff of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) have been working long hours to prepare for tomorrow's elections. The IEC said its 5,816 polling centers can accommodate 11.4 million voters. On Friday, the commission trained approximately 90,000 polling staff in a one-day session for polling center queue controllers, ballot paper issuers and ballot box controllers.

Also on Friday, polling centers were laid out, including some that are in tents. Over the past two



Afghans have used various means - from helicopters to donkeys - to transport polling materials to the remote corners of the country.

days, polling materials were handed over from the district field coordinators (DFCs) to the polling center managers.

Over the past several days, the IEC carried out a plan to shift a large number of DFCs to different locations within their assigned districts. Staff reshuffling has been a central strategy of this year's IEC to prevent fraud by distancing polling officials from local figures that could pressure them. This reshuffle *Continued on p.2*

How Afghanistan votes: single non-transferable vote

- Each of Afghanistan's 34 provinces is a single multi-member constituency with seats allocated based on population estimates. Kabul has 33 seats and much smaller provinces such as Nimroz and Nuristan have two seats.
- Each voter is able to cast one vote for his/her preferred candidate in a multiple-member district.
- One national constituency elects 10 reserved seats for the nomadic *Kuchi* population. Special polling stations for *Kuchis* have been assigned throughout the country.
- About 25 percent of the seats for each province and the *Kuchi* allocation are reserved for women.
- Candidates with the highest vote totals are awarded the seats assigned to each province. The same process is used to elect women and *Kuchis* to reserved seats.
- Heavily populated provinces such as Kabul have to use oversized, multi-page ballots to list all registered candidates. For this year's *Wolesi Jirga* election, more than 650 candidates are competing in Kabul.

Seats Available in <i>Wolesi Jirga</i> (with female seats reserved)	Balkh: 11 (3)	Wardak: 5 (2)	Badghis: 4 (1)
Kabul: 33 (9)	Kuchis: 10 (3)	Farah: 5 (1)	Kunar: 4 (1)
Herat: 17 (5)	Faryab: 9 (3)	Sar-i-Pul: 5 (1)	Laghman: 4 (1)
Nangarhar: 14 (4)	Kunduz: 9 (3)	Jowzjan: 5 (1)	Samangan: 4 (1)
Ghazni: 11 (3)	Badakshan: 9 (3)	Khost: 5 (1)	Paktika: 4 (1)
Kandahar: 11 (3)	Takhar: 9 (3)	Paktia: 5 (1)	Zabul: 3 (1)
	Helmand: 8 (2)	Kapisa: 4 (1)	Uruzgan: 3 (1)
	Baghlan: 8 (2)	Logar: 4 (1)	Panjshir: 2 (1)
	Parwan: 6 (2)	Bamiyan: 4 (1)	Nimroz: 2 (1)
	Ghor: 6 (2)	Daykundi: 4 (1)	Nuristan: 2 (1)



*Hewav TV in Kandahar hosts a debate for three candidates for the *Wolesi Jirga* in early Sept.*

Afghanistan prepares to vote *(continued from p.1)*

of DFCs occurred after the recruitment of polling staff was completed and before the movement of materials to polling centers. Earlier in the year, a number of provincial election officers were shifted to new locations.

Forty-eight hours before the start of the election, the IEC also announced an official end to campaign activities, which in 2005 included the transport of voters to the polls by campaigns. This year, the IEC excluded transport of voters from the “campaign activities” that are prohibited.

Security agencies began establishing security perimeters starting on Sept. 15 and will maintain the security presence until Sept. 25 to help prevent any post-election disturbances.



Women in Kandahar participate in Candidate Agent Training (CAT) led by NDI in 31 provinces nationwide. NDI trained over 35,000 candidates agents in polling day

Update: Pre-Election Complaints Process

At a Sept. 15 press conference, the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) announced that they had received 1,089 complaints since the beginning of the campaign period. Close to 600 have been adjudicated and the Provincial Electoral Complaints Commissions (PECCs) have been instructed to “deal with the backlog before the first polling complaints come in.”

As of Sept. 15, the ECC had received 58 appeals. Only three of these were upheld by the ECC. This, according to Commissioner Johann Kriegler, “is an indication...of the quality of the investigation at the provincial level.”

The ECC stated, on Sept. 16, that Herat holds the most complaints (163) while Paktika and Logar have only two each. A full breakdown of complaints has not been provided.

Other than the disqualification of candidates for charges of non-resignation or previous convictions of crimes, the ECC has not provided any details on decisions nor have any written decisions been posted on the ECC website.

Highlights from NDI's Observation from the Field

Northern Region

Militias could influence the electoral process in Faryab and further destabilize the province if commanders are not satisfied with results of the vote, according to international officials. Uzbek militias have proliferated over the past year in response to escalating activity from armed opposition groups (AOGs). Officials said the groups are connected to candidates who may use them to intimidate voters. They also worry that, in the post-election period, disgruntled candidates could use militias to attack government buildings, the IEC, or rival armed groups.

Last year, the government paid 20 militias to provide security at some polling centers (PCs). Such groups now protect many government buildings, and the provincial governor has asked the Ministry of Interior to endorse their services on election day. Although the process has not been formalized, observers expected these militias to guard some PCs this year. In at least one occasion, militias have already protected election materials. On the evening of Sept. 15, AOGs attacked a convoy carrying election materials through Kohistan district. A former commander, who is now a provincial council member, sent armed men to repel the attack.

International officials said that connections between militia groups and candidates – some of whom are commanders – are well-known. AOGs have been blamed for the increasing violence in Faryab, but there are allegations that candidates have used militias to stage security incidents, which would be blamed on the Taliban or other AOGs. Such incidents would serve to discourage agents of rival candidates, or FEFA workers, from entering certain districts.

Polling materials are positioned across Afghanistan - from Nimroz to Nuristan - waiting for polling to start tomorrow.

Eastern Region

The streets were quiet in Jalalabad on the day before voting, although interviewees reported concerns about intimidation, corruption, fraud, possible attacks by the Taliban or other anti-governmental forces on election day.

Posters were taken down for the beginning of the silence period. At the IEC office, the provincial election officer (PEO) for Nangarhar cited the logistical challenges involved in getting ballot papers to all polling stations by evening. Training was conducted for 160 contingency polling staff who will have up to two hours to arrive at and set up new polling stations on election day to replace stations where all 600 ballots have been used. Fifteen vehicles will be on standby for this purpose.

On Sept. 15, there were demonstrations in Jalalabad over the closure of 114 polling stations because of security concerns and the



lack of Afghan National Police to guard these stations. The IEC has said that neither local militia nor village elders may be used as guards. The PEO said the IEC agreed on Thursday to open an additional 21 polling centers — however, this would not be possible since materials had already been distributed to all other centers in the province.

NDI, which has worked in Afghanistan since 2002, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. For the 2010 elections, NDI conducted seminars for over 1,700 candidates, organized training for political parties and more than 240 women candidates, and provided technical assistance to the Free and Fair Elections Foundation of Afghanistan (FEFA), the country's largest domestic election monitoring organization. Currently, NDI is developing the capacity of candidate agents nationwide to report on election-day activities.