

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is conducting an observation mission and analyzing Afghanistan's electoral process before, during and after the April 5 presidential and provincial council elections.

## Presidential candidates gather endorsements as campaign kicks off

Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai continued to receive endorsements from political powerbrokers this week as the two candidates kicked off their campaigns for the second round of presidential elections.

Ghani received the support of Ahmad Zia Massoud, who served as vice president to current president Hamid Karzai during his first term as president. Ghani promised to appoint Massoud head of the Economy Committee overseeing multiple ministries should he win the runoff election. Massoud ran in the first round presidential election as vice presidential candidate to Zalmay Rassoul, who placed third in the April 5 vote and endorsed Abdullah in the second round.

Abdullah received an endorsement from Mahmoud Karzai, a well-known businessman and brother to President Hamid Karzai. Abdullah also received the support of Amrullah Saleh, the former director of the National Directorate of Security and leader of Afghanistan Green Trend, an online youth political group that claims 50,000 members.

Ghani secured the backing of another former vice presidential candidate, Sayed Hussain Anwari, who ran alongside Abdul Rahim Wardak before he pulled out of the first round presidential election. Anwari is the leader of the People's Islamic Movement Party of Afghanistan.

Twenty-five leaders of the Alekozai tribe also announced their support for Ghani. The majority of the tribe had previously backed Rassoul in the first round election. Ghani was also endorsed by Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai, a former mujahideen leader who served as Afghanistan's prime minister from 1992 to 1996 and ran for president in 2004. Ahmadzai supported Abdul Rab Rassoul Sayyaf in the first round.

A representative of Sayyaf's office confirmed that the presidential candidate had held meetings with both campaign teams. The representative said that Sayyaf is likely to make a decision on which candidate to support within days. Sayyaf received 7.04 percent of the vote in the first round, placing him fourth out of eight candidates.

On May 21, presidential candidate Mohammad Daoud Sultanzoi announced that he would support Ghani in the runoff election. Sultanzoi received 0.46 percent of the vote in the first round, placing him seventh out of eight candidates.

### Brief Updates

- The IEC stated that it would make public the names of government officials accused of interfering in the elections if the president's office does not take action against them, Tolo News reported.
- The IEC has issued as many as 70,000 accreditation cards to candidate agents to monitor the runoff vote, Tolo News reported.
- The movement of election materials from provincial centers to districts has not yet begun and is expected to start in the next 24 to 48 hours.

## Final provincial council election results delayed

The announcement of the final results of the provincial council elections will be delayed as the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) processes more than 3,000 complaints.

The IEC was scheduled to announce the final results on June 7, but it must wait until it receives decisions on complaints from the IECC, which says it will share its final decisions on June 12. Of the 3,000 total complaints on the provincial council elections, 1,636 were related to the preliminary results. The IECC stated that decisions on these complaints could change the final outcome of the vote.

The IECC provided a 24-hour period for the registration of complaints following the May 20 announcement of preliminary results, but extended the deadline to 48 hours due to the high volume of complaints it received. Most complaints suggested that the number of votes announced was lower than the number of votes counted on ballot sheets, according to the IECC.

“The subject of the complaints with us is mostly that the Independent Election Commission included a lower number of votes in its preliminary results,” IECC spokesman Nadir Mohseni said in a press conference. “If the cases carry evidence or can be affirmed, then there will be changes in the final results.”

The IEC said it audited more than 1,000 voting stations during the counting process for the provincial council elections, and votes at more than 1,500 stations were recounted. The IEC also invalidated votes from 588 polling sites.

The IECC will hold daily hearings regarding these complaints from May 31 to June 5. The sessions will be organized by region.

## Provincial council election results demonstrate support for female candidates

Female candidates won 21 percent of the provincial council seats, according to the preliminary results of the April 5 elections. The percentage is slightly higher than the 20 percent quota of seats set aside for women in the electoral law, but less than the 25 percent required during previous elections.

According to the preliminary results, 18 of the 97 female candidates who won seats did so independently of the quota. Of those 18 seats, six were in Kabul, while three were in Daikundi and two in Helmand. Women also won a seat independent of the quota in Herat, Kunduz, Wardak, Samangan, Farah, Logar and Nimroz.

In Kabul, three women received the highest number of votes out of all of the candidates in the district, while one woman received the highest number of votes in Daikundi. A female candidate received the second highest number of votes in Nimroz.

In 27 provinces, female candidates received more votes on average on April 5 than they did in the 2009 provincial council elections. Female candidates received fewer votes in six provinces, and about the same in one province

