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For more information contact:

Kathy Gest, kgest@ndi.org, 202-728-5535, in Washington

Ans Zwerver, azwerver@ndi.org, in Kabul

**NDI EXPRESSES SERIOUS CONCERN ABOUT
AFGHANISTAN RUNOFF ELECTION DISPUTE**

KABUL – The National Democratic Institute (NDI) today expressed deep concern over the dispute emerging from Afghanistan’s June 14 presidential runoff election. Candidate Dr. Abdullah Abdullah has withdrawn his supporters from observing the vote tally and threatened to reject the election results, citing what he asserts is the Independent Election Commission’s (IEC’s) high estimated turnout rate as well as bias on the part of IEC officials.

NDI hopes that the ongoing electoral process would continue to be supported by all stakeholders and that every effort will be made to ensure that the vote tallying and counting, along with the complaints and adjudication process, enjoy broad confidence in order to promote the widespread acceptance of the election’s results. Election authorities and political contestants must work to preserve the important electoral gains that have been made in recent years.

NDI conducted [an election assessment mission](#) and fielded 100 Afghan staff observers on June 14 who visited 312 polling stations in 26 provinces. As in previous elections, security constraints prevented observation in all parts of the country. The NDI mission was informed by [a pre-election assessment](#) the Institute conducted in December 2013 and [observation of the April elections](#). Other NDI programs include assistance to five Afghan election monitoring organizations that mobilized thousands of citizen monitors from across Afghanistan for the runoff.

Although the IEC has not yet released any official provincial numbers, unofficial voter turnout estimates – which were obtained from provincial IEC offices – are, in some places, significantly higher than those of the first round election. This includes provinces such as Khost and Paktika. While these findings do not necessarily indicate misconduct, they require special scrutiny to ensure the integrity of the electoral process.

Following the June 14 runoff, the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) has received 2,558 complaints. Additional complaints may be filed after July 2, when the preliminary results are announced by the IEC. The complaints process should be conducted transparently, thoroughly and fairly, NDI said. Afghans should be confident that the results of the election truly reflect how voters freely cast their ballots. This is essential to the mandate of any government that emerges from the polls.