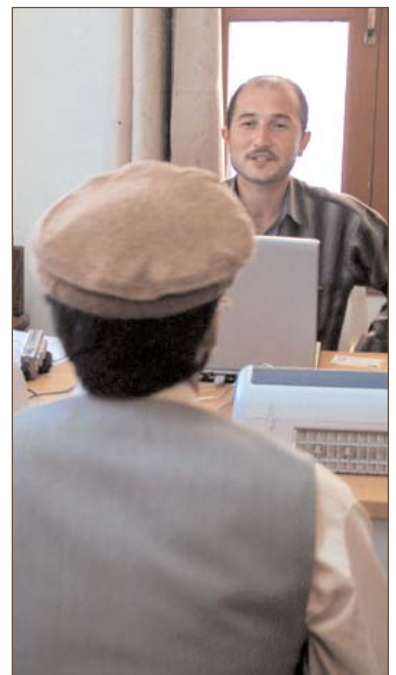




Candidate Nomination



In the Nangarhar provincial office, candidates prepare to nominate. Left: A prospective candidate adjusts her scarf for a photograph. Middle: A candidate contemplates which of the three drawn symbols will represent him. Right: A Data Entry Clerk assists a potential candidate with the process.

Less than 24 hours before student demonstrations in Jalalabad turned into violent attacks, Khosera Habibi, National Provincial Training Coordinator and Team Leader of the Candidate Nomination Centre at the Nangarhar provincial office, marveled at the success of the nomination process thus far.

"Things have been going extremely well," Habibi reported on Tuesday 10 May. "People have been coming in steadily. We have a team of six Data Entry Clerks who are able to assist anyone asking for information or applying for nomination."

Prior to the violence that occurred in Jalalabad on Wednesday, 11 May, 320 individuals visited the Nangarhar provincial office seeking candidate nomination forms and supplemental information. At the time of our interview, 55 had nominated for the Wolesi Jirga, eight women among them; 52

individuals had nominated for Provincial Council seats, three women among them, including one who had her photograph taken during our visit. While submitting her nomination papers, CEO Peter Erben toured the center as part of his comprehensive visit to the Eastern region. The female applicant's husband capitalized on his visit by raising an issue of concern - the requirement for female candidates to be photographed.

While Erben explained that all candidates, whether male or female, may cover their heads but not their faces, as per JEMB regulatory procedures, Habibi listened closely. "This is what my staff told the woman's husband as well," Habibi said. "They are very well trained in the nomination procedures."

Out of the eight female candidates, two have come in with their husbands. The man who accompanied his wife today was the first

"The Nangarhar provincial office experienced a minor setback when it was damaged during riots on 11 May. Although closed temporarily, the office reopened on 18 May and Candidate Nomination continues under the guidance of Habibi and his capable staff."

Continued on Page 2

person to come in and vocalize his distain for this regulation regarding a woman being photographed uncovered. Although this individual voiced his objection about this particular procedure, Habibi described the process as incredibly smoothly since inception.

"We rarely receive any complaints," reported Habibi. "If we do, it is usually about the symbols. Many of the candidates are unhappy with their choice of symbols."

After presenting the required paperwork and being photographed, candidates randomly select three symbols in a lottery system. From these three, the candidate selects one symbol to use as an additional means of identification during campaigning and on the ballot. This system is referred to as "Chance and Choice." "Often those who choose brooms, ice cream cones, or shoes are dismayed," Habibi said. "They feel that these symbols hold no meaning and therefore no value. Most request a second chance to choose, hoping for a pen, a lion or an eagle, or books."

Occasionally, individuals do not recognize the symbol. A candidate who was drawing from the box during our conversation asked the Data Entry Clerk to identify one of his selected symbols - the symbol in question was that of two electric floor lamps.

The Nangarhar Centre reported that several potential candidates have come in to inquire about the resignation requirement. Candidates in senior or official positions within specified government, legal or military organizations, must resign before submitting their candidate nomination application.

"Some have already resigned when they come in," Habibi said. "Others just want clarification. We think that several are waiting until the last minute to resign and will come in with their nomination forms in the last few days."

One individual came from a very remote village on the border of Logar province. He traveled all day and came with a long list of 200 signatures which included the inked thumbprints of the individuals. This made quite an impression on Habibi. The applicant did not have the forms because he had not yet visited the Nomination Centre. He heard about the nomination process on the radio, collected the signatures and the correct amount of money and filled out the additional paperwork at the office.

Of the more than 100 individuals who had nominated themselves for either Wolesi Jirga or Provincial Council seats, 22 have simultaneously registered to vote. Electoral Law stipulates that candidates must be registered voters at the time of nomination. Those who do not yet have a voter registration card may register during the nomination process.

Nangarhar province was one of the busiest Candidate Nomination centres when riots broke out on Wednesday 11 May. The Nangarhar provincial office experienced a minor setback when it was attacked and damaged considerably. Although international staff were temporarily withdrawn from the region, the office reopened on 18 May. Candidate Nomination continues under the guidance of Habibi and his capable staff. ■

Official Visit

Chief Electoral Officer Peter Erben, in what is to be the first of many regional visits, met with electoral staff from the Eastern regional provinces of Nuristan, Kunar, Laghman and Nangarhar last week.

Erben toured the Candidate Nomination centers in the remote, mountainous province of Nuristan where he met with acting Provincial Electoral Officer (PEO) James Hamilton. At the time of the visit, seven Wolesi Jirga candidates had registered in Nuristan, including two women. Five Provincial Council candidates had come forward; there were no women among them.

The Nuristan office is located in the Peroon Valley. This central valley can be difficult to access from the eastern and western valleys; the geographic complexities necessitate additional civic educators who are currently being recruited to help deliver materials and messages. Among the incoming staff, female staff members have been diligently sought for the upcoming registration period.

The remote province of Kunar, with its mild climate and rolling hills, presents a challenge to visitors; this inaccessible area is only consistently reachable by air transport. The provincial office is currently undergoing reparations and international staff, therefore, have been working out of the regional office in Jalalabad. They will relocate to the permanent office in the next few weeks when preparations have been completed. This is a significant improvement from last year, when, due to security issues, all activities for Kunar province were run entirely out of Jalalabad regional office.

Bernd Burwitz, PEO in Kunar province, showed Erben around his office and discussed the challenges his staff faced and how they have overcome them.

"We've had a few small setbacks," Burwitz explained. "At times we could not send the collected information to headquarters due to the lack of internet connection. So we burned the data to CDs and sent the information that way."

Burwitz and his colleagues appreciated the opportunity to speak with Erben directly about the particular issues that the Kunar office faced. "Peter gives an overview of the election process, why things have been done the way they have," said Burwitz. "Peter's explanation puts things into perspective."

Continued on Page 6



CEO Peter Erben meets with staff members of the Eastern regional and provincial offices.

Commissioner Momina Yari



As the youngest delegate to the Emergency Loya Jirga at age 25 and the only woman appointed to head one of the constitutional committees at the Constitutional Loya Jirga, to say that JEMB Commissioner Momina Yari has an impressive resume

would be an understatement.

Born in Kabul in 1978, Yari and her family emigrated to Peshawar, Pakistan in the early 1980's. Having studied in Peshawar, Yari completed her education with the receipt of a Bachelor's degree in Justice from Peshawar University. Following graduation, she became a lecturer at the general college for women in English and Social Studies.

Despite the fact that Yari was very young when her family moved to Pakistan, she held fond memories of her childhood in Kabul and longed to live and work in her country. After the Bonn Agreement was signed in late 2001, Yari returned to Kabul.

"After the Taliban, there was no reason for us to stay in Pakistan," Yari said. "I wanted the opportunity to work in Afghanistan and to take part in the reconstruction of our country. Especially women's rights."

Yari became sensitive to these issues as an Afghan woman in Pakistan. "There is a major difference between the two countries," Yari said. "Not in religious perspective but from a cultural and traditional point of view. Security-wise, in Peshawar I could go anywhere freely, with no worries. But not here. We have suffered 22 years of war and instability; women lost everything. During the Taliban time, we lost access to education, we lost all rights. Female doctors and nurses cannot work and women have lost access to medical care."

Yari's interest in human rights issues, particularly women's rights, led her to an appointment as the Director of the Legal Department at the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) from May 2002 until March 2003. As the law was the basis for any recourse against human rights violations, Yari led the department through the review and redress of many domestic cases involving women's rights issues.

Following her work with MoWA, Yari joined the Department of Support and Development of Women Rights with the Independent Human Rights Commission in March 2003.

In this capacity, Yari looked at issues of women's rights development with the assistance of eight regional offices throughout the country.

As four seats to the Emergency Loya Jirga were distributed through MoWA, Yari was appointed to the body in 2002 at the age of 25. "I was very young, the youngest delegate," Yari recalled. "After a very long period, for the first time a large number of representatives came together to do their best for the peace, stability and reconstruction of Afghanistan. It was a very happy time when Afghans united under one roof to discuss issues of their country and appoint a president for the transitional period."

Yari was one of 100 women out of 500 delegates at the Constitutional Wolesi Jirga. Of these 100, Yari was the only woman to lead one of the ten constitutional committees.

"Nine of the ten committees were headed by jihadi leaders like Rabani and other very prominent personalities," said Yari. "I thought that women should be leading the committees too. So I stood up and said so. I told others that I would like to break the tradition of women not applying for higher level positions and that I would like, with my brothers, to have the courage to nominate myself to this committee."

Yari led the third committee, which along with the nine other committees, each comprised of 50 representatives, reviewed and revised articles of the new constitution. "It took a lot of courage. I was waiting and thought other women would nominate themselves too. But I was the only one to speak out and nominate myself."

In December 2004, Yari accepted the government appointment of Commissioner to the JEMB.

"This position allows me to do something for the newborn democracy process in this country," Yari said. "I really believe that this is important for social justice - the establishment of a parliament that represents the people of Afghanistan and solves the problems of people of this country."

"The representation of women will be ensured by parliament; women will be allowed to have a say in women's issues."

As far as visions of the future, Yari is concentrating on the present. She hopes to continue to work with the Independent Election Commission to see the democratic process through the municipal and district elections.

"I would like to help ensure a system to guarantee that human rights become a main focus and are implemented. It is my wish especially that women's rights are recognized and respected." ■

Representing the Kuchis

Just behind the hills that shadow the Kabul Airport, a small Kuchi community rests after the annual month-long spring migration from the lowlands in Laghman province to the pastures that surround Kabul city. We have gathered together in patchwork tents which provide relief from a relentless sun to discuss Candidate Nomination.

The migratory lifestyle of the Kuchis lends itself to specific challenges and particular concerns.

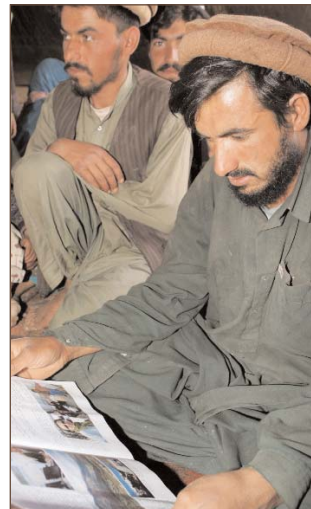
Malek Gulwali, a member of the Tarahil tribe, identified several major issues that he believes will dominate the agenda of the Kuchi Representatives to the Wolesi Jirga. Topping the list of concerns are mobile veterinary clinics for animals, mobile schools for children, health clinics to meet the needs of women and children, and the landmine issue- particularly perilous for the nomadic Kuchis.

There have been repeated requests for mobile polling centres. Last year, many people registered and received cards but were unable to vote due to the absence of a conveniently located polling station and a lack of forthcoming information about its location. To remedy this, representatives have inquired about comprehensive civic education that specifically targets their nomadic communities and

three seats had been set aside for women. The shura of the Tarahil community believes that candidates should have some degree of formal education; because girls in this community are needed in the homes to assist with household chores, they do not have time for schooling. Gulwali was supportive of the concept of female representatives and believed candidates would be drawn from the domestic Kuchi communities in and around Kabul. Domestic Kuchis, Gulwali explained, have settled in one area and have forgone the nomadic lifestyle of their grandparents. "Women in the domestic communities have had formal educations and are able to work outside the home," Gulwali said.

However, Bibi inserted, "this is why we need women to represent us - to make sure that girls will go to school too and have these opportunities in the future."

Land is another issue of great importance to the Kuchi community. In the past, there have been problems between Kuchi communities and other sedentary groups who disputed claims to the same land. "This has always been an issue for us," Gulwali said. "During the Taliban, Kuchi leaders went to Mullah Omar to ask the govern-



Left: A Kuchi community outside of Kabul. Middle: Members of the Tarahil tribe check out the latest edition of the "JEMB Update."
Right: Malek Gulwali proudly displays his Voter Registration Card.

additional mobile polling stations.

This is particularly important for female voters, a point reiterated by Bibi, the matriarch of one family we visited. She shared her thoughts about the voting process over a warm bowl of freshly boiled cheese and sweet chai. "Mobile polling stations are very important for women," said Bibi. "We don't have time to walk all day to vote. We cannot get away from our work at home. The polling station needs to come to us."

At the time of writing of this article, 24 Kuchi candidates had come forward for the ten Wolesi Jirga seats; three of these ten are reserved for women, though no women have nominated to date.

Gulwali said that the Tarahil tribe would not put any female candidates forward; in fact, he was unaware that

ment to protect our lands. Recently we sent representatives to the Ministry of Interior to ask that they make sure our lands are protected. This will obviously be a major issue for Kuchi representatives to the Wolesi Jirga."

Members of Gulwali's shura first learned about the upcoming elections through announcements on the BBC's Pashto service. They then convened to discuss the Nomination process and selected one representative from the tribe to run as a candidate.

Bibi, for her part, hopes that the newly elected Kuchi representatives will be able to bring into focus the "rights of the kuchis," which she described as the same rights as others - right to land, to medical assistance, education, veterinary medicine. ■

Illustrating the Point

Civic education is an essential element of electoral preparations. In order to reach the broadest audience in a constituency with a significant number of illiterate voters, the JEMBS relies on the vision and talents of a cartoonist, a painter and an illustrator.

JEMBS cartoonist Jacques Zahles is a former graphic designer with UNESCO in Paris. He currently runs his own graphic design company out of Paris which specializes in visual communications, including cartoons and graphic designs for posters, magazines, ads, corporate logos, and other works related to designing an image.

UNESCO remained a loyal fan of his work, sending him on numerous missions in West Africa and Southeast Asia. Designing educational materials for illiterate audiences became Zahles' specialty. His research and experience in this area led to his creation of a dictionary of 1,500 of the most commonly used images in educational drawings.

In preparation for the 1998 national elections in Cambodia, UNESCO recruited Zahles to direct its large educational project. In this capacity, he designed all of the drawings for the government's census campaign. "The project was very challenging because the population was very scared of anything coming from government," Zahles said. "We had to find something that would gain their confidence and attention. I designed a logotype, made an animated movie of this logotype. The most famous female Cambodian singer recorded the theme song of the campaign." The song became an instant hit and soon young and old knew the tune well enough to sing along. Due to the success of the campaign, 98 percent of the population agreed to participate in census.

The Graphics section works with the Message Development section of Public Outreach, as well as procedures writers and trainers to ascertain what the drawing will communicate. Zahles then drafts drawings that illustrate these political concepts. These images are tested through focus groups comprised of illiterate individuals who may not be familiar with the topic.

"Most of the time, it works," said Zahles, of the drawings. But this is not always the case. In preparing materials for the presidential election civic education campaign, Zahles essayed to create a drawing that would tell a story answering many basic electoral questions. One drafted drawing depicted a man and a woman who know

little about elections so they ask each other questions. "The man is scratching his head as a sign of confusion. Focus group participants thought the image was of someone who was deaf and mute and believed that the message was only meant for a deaf and mute audience. I had taken for granted that the connotation of this image would be applicable. I thought it would be widely understood. But that was not the case."

Messages for a particular target audience can be especially tricky. "When you produce a poster for women, you should never provoke the men," said Zahles. "Otherwise it will have the opposite effect." An original draft of a poster encouraging women's participation in the voting process depicts a large group of women; several are uncovered, one stands in the foreground raising her hand in a clenched fist. This, Zahles said, was a mistake. "I didn't want to draw burkas in the beginning because I felt that if we present women in burkas it means we accept them. We had big talks about this with Public Outreach. They convinced me that if we want women to come and vote, we must also target the many women who wear burkas."

The feedback provided by focus groups is incorporated into new drafts and retested. A final draft is presented to the JEMB Commission for comments and approval. At this stage, the rough drawing is passed on to two notable Afghan contemporary artists for realization - painter Ghulam Sediq and illustrator Asef Alef.

Continued on Page 6



Top: Jacques Zahles sketching a draft. Bottom left: Asef Alef illustrating civic education materials.

Bottom right: Ghulam Sediq lends his artistic talents to the public outreach posters.



Viorica Dumitru, the Provincial Administrative Officer for Kunar province, felt that Erben's visit would bring change. "We have a few issues that need to be solved quickly," said Dumitru. "It was good for him to come and see himself. I believe that action will follow his visit."

Erben's visit to the Laghman provincial office was cancelled due to security concerns; however, he was able to meet with the staff of the office. Laghman province boasts a staff of 71; six international staff currently commute from Jalalabad while their accommodations are being refurbished.

At the time of writing, 45 candidates had successfully nominated - 27 for Wolesi Jirga seats, four women among them, and 18 for the Provincial Council. A total of 108 individuals had come to the Laghman office to pick up Candidate Nomination materials. "We expect that people are out now collecting signatures and will be nominating during the last few days of the period," said Gayatri Pandey, PEO in Laghman province.

The greatest challenge to the Laghman staff has been the security situation in the province. "Two out of our five districts are off limits, even to security staff," Pandey said. This is due to incidents which occurred during preparation for last year's election and ongoing military activities involving international forces.

"Peter clarified several things, such as the registration process, which is helpful for planning," Pandey said. "We were able to exchange views - get information from Kabul and share our field perspective with him."

At the Nangarhar provincial office, Erben met with PEO Joe Brinker, who introduced him to office staff and led him through the Candidate Nomination Centre. "It really is my national staff who are making this whole operation run as well as it does," Brinker said. "I am so impressed with them. Everyone works so well together."

Staff at the Eastern regional office in Jalalabad also met with Erben. "Peter's approach and field visits have a positive impact on the motivation of staff," said Zoran Trajkovski, Regional External Relations officer for the Eastern region. "By coming out here he is made aware of the challenges people face. He will be better equipped to find solutions, taking field issues and incorporating them into procedure and practice at higher levels in Kabul." ■



Left: CEO Erben holds a "doorstep" press conference at the Eastern Regional Office.

Right: Mr. Sediq and Mr. Alef's combined talents produce one of many civic education posters.

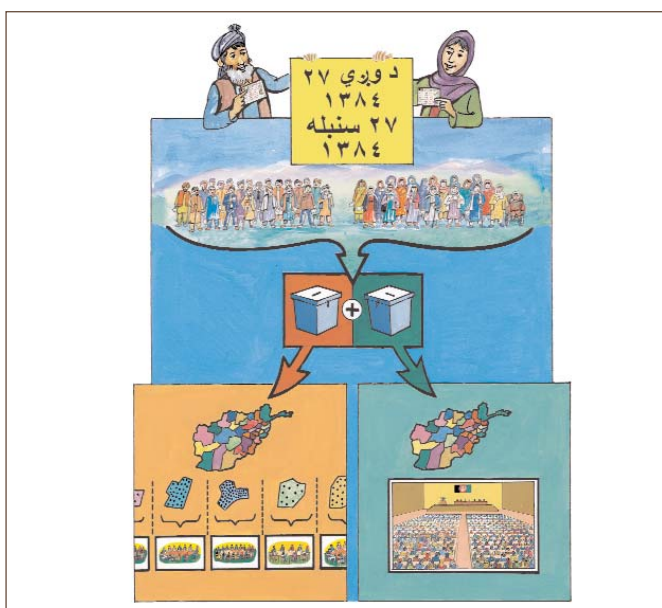
Mr. Ghulam Sediq is well known in Afghan art circles. Self-trained, Sediq has been painting for more than 38 years. He is a 1965 graduate of the Industrial Vocational School of Kabul. He left his home as civil war engulfed Kabul and settled in Pakistan in 1993 where he continued to teach at Amani High School in Peshawar. He has created more than 7,000 Realist works in water-color oil and char-color and has received awards from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Information and Culture.

"Together, the three artists combat the barriers presented by illiteracy with their weapons of choice - colored pencils and paintbrushes."

As an art teacher at Amani High School, Sediq recalls one student who stood out - Mr. Asef Alef. "Alef was in my fifth class at Amani," Sediq recalled. "He was very talented then and is even better now."

Alef is an illustrator by trade. He first began to develop an interest in drawing at the age of seven and continued his artistic training through his secondary and tertiary education. Distinguished in Kabul for his calligraphy, wall paintings and frescoes in mosques including Shah - e-Doshamshira and Abdul Hadi-Davi, Alef has created more than 1,000 paintings and calligraphies in Classic and Realistic styles.

Together, the three artists combat the barriers presented by illiteracy with their weapons of choice - colored pencils and paintbrushes. ■



Meet the Press...

PRESS RELEASE • MAY 17 2005

ELECTION CHIEF URGES AFGHANS TO RUN FOR PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

The Chairman of the Joint Electoral Management Body Bissmillah Bismil called on Afghans to make an effort to participate in upcoming Provincial Council elections, by putting themselves forward as candidates in the final days of the Candidate Nomination period.

Elections for the 34 Provincial Councils will be held concurrently with Wolesi Jirga elections on September 18, 2005.

"While the JEMB is very pleased to see that more than 2,000 Afghan men and women have stepped forward as candidates for the Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections since April 30, we would like to see more people come forward to run for a seat on one of the 34 Provincial Councils," Mr Bismil said.

The majority of candidates who have submitted nomination papers so far are running for the Wolesi Jirga, the Lower House of the National Assembly.

The Chairman reminded voters that at least one quarter of Provincial Council seats are reserved for women.

"I personally call on Afghan women to take advantage of the chance to win a seat on a Provincial Council. Between three and eight seats on each Provincial Council are reserved for women," Mr Bismil said.

"If the seats reserved for women are not filled, they will remain vacant until the next elections."

Each Provincial Council will elect one of its members to sit on the Meshrano Jirga, the Upper House of the National Assembly. One-third of Meshrano Jirga members will be from Provincial Councils.

For more information please contact:

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bronwync@unops.org.af

PRESS RELEASE • MAY 18 2005

CANDIDATE NOMINATION PERIOD EXTENDED

Due to the ongoing security problems experienced around Afghanistan the past week and the consequent closure of some provincial offices, the Joint Electoral Management Body has extended the Candidate Nomination period by three days, from Saturday May 21 to Monday May 23 inclusive.

The three-day extension applies to all provinces except Nangarhar, where Candidate Nomination will be extended by a full six days, from Saturday May 21 to Thursday May 26. This exception is due to the Candidate Nomination office in Nangarhar closing since Wednesday May 12.

"With this extension, interested Afghans are given another opportunity to nominate themselves as candidates for the Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections," JEMB Chairman Bissmillah Bissmil said.

"This period is the last chance you have to run for office in the upcoming elections, which will mark another important step towards democracy in Afghanistan."

Since Candidate Nominations began on April 30, more than 2,300 people have stepped forward as candidates to contest the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of the National Assembly) and Provincial Council elections.

For daily updates about the number of Candidate Nomination applications received in all 34 provincial offices for both Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council seats, go to www.jemb.org/candidatenomination.htm.

News in Brief...

• The following offices were closed for some time due to security reasons: Jalalabad (closed on 11 May - opened on 18 May at 10.40), Logar (closed on 11 May at 11.30 - opened on 16 May), Wardak (closed on 11 May at 15.00 - opened on 15 May at 9.30), Kapisa (closed on 12 May for a couple of hours), Takhar (closed on 12 May at 10.00 for the rest of the day), Kunduz (closed on 14 May), Faryab (closed on 17 May at 10.30 for the rest of the day).

• The JEMB issued a decision clarifying the way in which Kuchis will participate in the election; they will be allowed to vote for the Kuchi constituency alone and only in designated Kuchi Polling Stations.

• Key dates of the electoral process were identified in an electoral calendar. The calendar was adopted by the JEMB and is available on the website at www.jemb.org.

• By close of business on Thursday, 19 May, a total of 2,472 individuals had successfully nominated for seats in the Wolesi Jirga, of which 282 are women. Similarly, 2,302 candidates nominated for Provincial Council seats at the end of last week; 141 are women. For the Kuchi seats, 55 men and 3 women have come forward.

• The Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) welcomed its five new commissioners: Syed Munib, nominated by the Supreme Court of Afghanistan; Muhammad Farid Hamidi, nominated by the Independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan; and Jaye Sittou, Grant Kippen and Hadija Miiro, nominated by the SRSG. All five nominees were accepted and appointed to the ECC.

• The JEMB decided on the official campaign period. It will last 30 days and cease 48 hours before the commencement of polling.

• JEMB Commissioner Ray Kennedy left to assume a new role in the elections in Liberia. The JEMB and its Secretariat join together in wishing Commissioner Kennedy all the best in his new endeavors.

• JEMB Commissioners Ms. Mastora Estanikzai and Mr. Abdul Hakim Murad visited the provincial capital of Herat. During their stay, the Commissioners held a press conference on the extension of Candidate Nomination, met with the Governor and spoke with many groups including the political parties, shuras, women's groups and JEMBS staff from regional and provincial offices.



Photo above right: JEMB Commissioners Estanikzai and Murad announce the extension of Candidate Nomination at the Herat Radio and Television headquarters.

Below right: Deputy SRSG Filippo Grandi looks on as JEMB Chairman Bismillah Bismil pins an honorary medal on Commissioner Kennedy.

National Assembly Elections: Financial Status as of May 17, 2005		
Received (funds transferred to UNDP)		
DONOR	AMOUNT USD	Amount (Local Currency)
USA	12,000,000	
Greece committed in 2004 transferred in 2005	678,426	
Switzerland committed in 2004 for 2005	1,754,386	
Netherlands (carry over from CLJ)	844,712	
Australia (exchange gains from 2004)	35,190	
New Zealand (exchange gains from 2004)	48,616	
Netherlands	5,284,015	€ 4,000,000
UK	2,873,563	£1,500,000
Denmark	2,000,000	
New Zealand	729,927	NZ\$1,000,000
Total received to date	26,248,835	
Committed (agreement signed)		
DONOR	AMOUNT USD	
Switzerland	1,000,000	
Australia	1,545,296	AUD\$2,000,000
DFID	4,981,224	£2,600,000
Norway 1	800,000	NOK 5,000,000
Total committed	8,326,520	
Pledged (letter received)		
Total pledged	41,220,000	
Total Project Budget	148,665,087	
Effective Carry Over from 2004	16,027,851	
Total Received 2005	26,248,835	
Total Committed (agreement signed)	8,326,520	
UNFUNDED	98,061,881	

For further information about the JEMB Update please contact: Jiffer Bourguignon at jifferb@unops.org.af or visit our website www.jemb.org.

Photography: Marie Frechon and Jiffer Bourguignon/JEMBS