

Summary & Findings of the Asian Network for Free Elections from the Complete Ballot Audit in Afghanistan 2014



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Background

The Asian Network for Free Elections' (ANFREL) Audit Observation Mission (EOM) to observe the Full Audit of the 2014 Afghan Presidential Election Runoff came about after a series of discussions between ANFREL, The Asia Foundation (TAF) Office in Afghanistan, and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

The full audit was in response to lingering complaints about fraud in the Presidential runoff election and, more specifically, was prompted by a negotiated agreement made between the runoff candidates, Dr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah. The extent of the fraud, whether real or perceived, was enough to spur significant portions of the population to question the election's legitimacy and consider alternative means of taking power. This pressure filled environment gave birth to the audit, a process designed to "clean" the entirety of the runoff results as quickly as possible. By reviewing every ballot box, stakeholders from the candidates to the Independent Election Commission hoped to build back the election's legitimacy by removing fraudulent results from the legitimate ballots of voters. Due to the urgency of the task at hand, stakeholders agreed that the audit should begin only a few days after the agreement was signed.

This rushed beginning to the audit required expedited observer recruitment and selection processes. With little time to confirm observers and begin visa applications, ANFREL could thankfully rely on some of the same observers it recruited for its abbreviated observation mission of the first round of the election. Less than a week after receiving news of the audit mission, two members of ANFREL's 13-person team departed Bangkok to get visas in Dubai and arrive in Kabul on the 25th of July. The ANFREL advance team met with TAF and DFAT officials, prepared for the arrival of the other observers, and got fully up to speed on the audit process itself. This early point in the process was notable for the slow pace of the audit caused by uncertainty about the rules among audit implementers and disagreement about those rules among the two candidates representatives.

Likely because the audit came from an agreement between the candidate negotiations, the IEC at this early stage was allowing the process to be led primarily by the candidates' themselves, a decision which contributed to the lengthy delays. Despite the audit having already started, key procedures and thresholds for things such as the number of similar markings necessary to trigger a recounts were still not finalized. Disagreement about such fundamental issues led to frequent walkouts and protests from candidate agents.

The 2014 Audit Observation Mission is ANFREL's third engagement in Afghanistan in 2014, having worked on both the first and runoff rounds of the Presidential Election. During this

and in all other missions, ANFREL abides by the existing Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Codes of conduct for observers that was signed by prominent international observers groups in 2005 (ANFREL is also a signatory to this declaration). The Observation Team endeavored to remain impartial and objective and to refrain from interfering in the electoral process at all times. The team was comprised of observers from numerous religions, ethnicities and nationalities reflecting the diverse nature of Asia's cultures, ethnicities and religious backgrounds.

The following report details the findings of approximately one month of observation of the physical audit of ballots in hangars at the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan, where the Asian Network for Free Elections had a team of 13 observers that observed a total of 731 ballot boxes.

The mission was implemented, and much gratitude is owed to, the coordination of TAF Afghanistan and the generous support of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). ANFREL is, as always, delighted to be able to play whatever part it can to strengthen Afghanistan's emerging democracy.

Mission Profile

ANFREL's mission to observe Afghanistan's 2014 Complete Audit of the Presidential Election Runoff Results carried the objective of strengthening Afghanistan's young electoral process. A continuation of its efforts from 2004 onward in Afghanistan, ANFREL aims to enhance the integrity of electoral processes and minimize election irregularities and election-related human rights violations. Beginning with its observation of the 2004 Presidential Elections and continuing through the current mission, ANFREL provides accurate & impartial reporting and analysis on issues related to elections. ANFREL also strives to enhance and sustain the capacity of civil society organizations to ensure an environment conducive for the conduct of free elections as well as for the realization of people's democratic aspirations.

ANFREL utilized a team of 13 international observers who worked closely with and were supported by a core equal number of interpreters, drivers, and local admin staff. The international observers have been selected primarily from ANFREL's member organizations and networks throughout Asia. The observers worked daily six-hour shifts seven days a week in the hangars at the International Election Commission where the audit was conducted. In addition to work in the hangars, observers attended decision-making meetings and press conferences of the IEC and met with other officials involved in the audit process to get more of a holistic, macro view of the audit process.

As international observers, the mandate of an observation mission rules out any kind of interference. The mission had no authority to change, improve or correct any shortcomings in audit processes during the audit period, just as ANFREL lacks a mandate to directly correct or improve such processes during a normal election process. The audit observation mission only had the mandate to collect and verify information from the audit, to analyze the data collected and to publish its observations including assessing the findings against international standards and best practices and make recommendations.

The Head of Mission is Mr. Damaso Magbual, Chairman of ANFREL Foundation and one of the leaders of the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) in the Philippines. Other senior observers are: Mr. Rohana Hettiarachchie, Executive Director of PAFFREL, Sri Lanka and Mr. Ichal Supriadi, the Executive Director of ANFREL.

Profile of Senior Observers

Mr. Damaso G. Magbual (Philippines), Head of Mission

A retired corporate executive and a former Professor of Philosophy and Political Science at St. Louis University in the Philippines, Mr. Magbual is the Chairman of the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) Foundation as well as a member of the National Council of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL); a member of its seven-man Executive Committee and Chairman of its Membership Growth and Development Committee. He has served as a resource speaker, trainer and consultant on election monitoring, electoral systems and administration in more than a dozen countries since 1987.

He has written numerous articles on election monitoring and observed a wide variety of elections across the region and beyond.

Mr. Rohana Nishantha Hettiarachchi (Sri Lanka), Deputy Head of Mission

Rohana is currently occupied as the Executive Director in a leading Election Monitoring & Observation Organization, namely PAFFREL, in Sri Lanka in addition to serving as the Secretary General of ANFREL. In addition to his extensive work with PAFFREL and ANFREL, Rohana engages in local civil society activities and contributes related Research.

Rohana has also served as the Vice-Chairman of Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya, which is the largest Civil Society Organisation in Sri Lanka with Island wide coverage.

Mr. Ichal Supriadi (Indonesia), Executive Director of ANFREL

Ichal Supriadi is the Executive Director of the Asian Network for Free Elections, an international organization focused on elections monitoring and strengthening democratic elections in Asia. As an election observer, Mr. Supriadi has written mission reports and observed in various countries in the Asian region, including the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Indonesia, including Aceh and Papua, Thailand, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Nepal. He has extended capacity in developing organizations. Before joining ANFREL, he was the executive director of KIPP Indonesia, Jakarta Provincial Branch. In addition, he has spoken in various trainings and conferences related to election observation. Mr. Supriadi is now pursuing his Master's degree at the Institute Human Rights and Peace (IHRP Study) Mahidol University, Thailand.

Findings

The following pages are a selection of summary findings and charts made from the data gathered by ANFREL's observation of the audit. Because the audit itself was an unprecedented event on a scale and in a form unseen in ANFREL's fifteen plus years of observation, ANFREL's observation of the audit was similarly unique. As mentioned above, ANFREL audited 731 ballot boxes during the course of its approximately 1 month in country. These 731 boxes audited equate to 3.2% of the total of 22,828 boxes. ANFREL's audited portion ended with 33.66%(246) of the total of 731 being from female polling stations and the remaining 63.34%(485) of the 731 boxes being from male polling stations. This sampling is large enough to ensure a fairly high degree of confidence in the findings as representative of the whole set of boxes, with a few important provisos.

Polling Stations Audited Broken Down by Gender

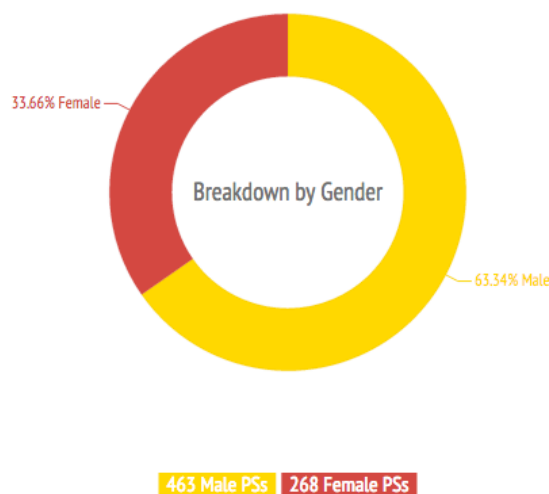


Figure 2: Audited Boxes Broken down by Gender

Among them, due to the peculiarities of where boxes were stored in warehouses and also due to random chance, the geographic distribution of

Figure 1: Ballot Boxes Audited by Province

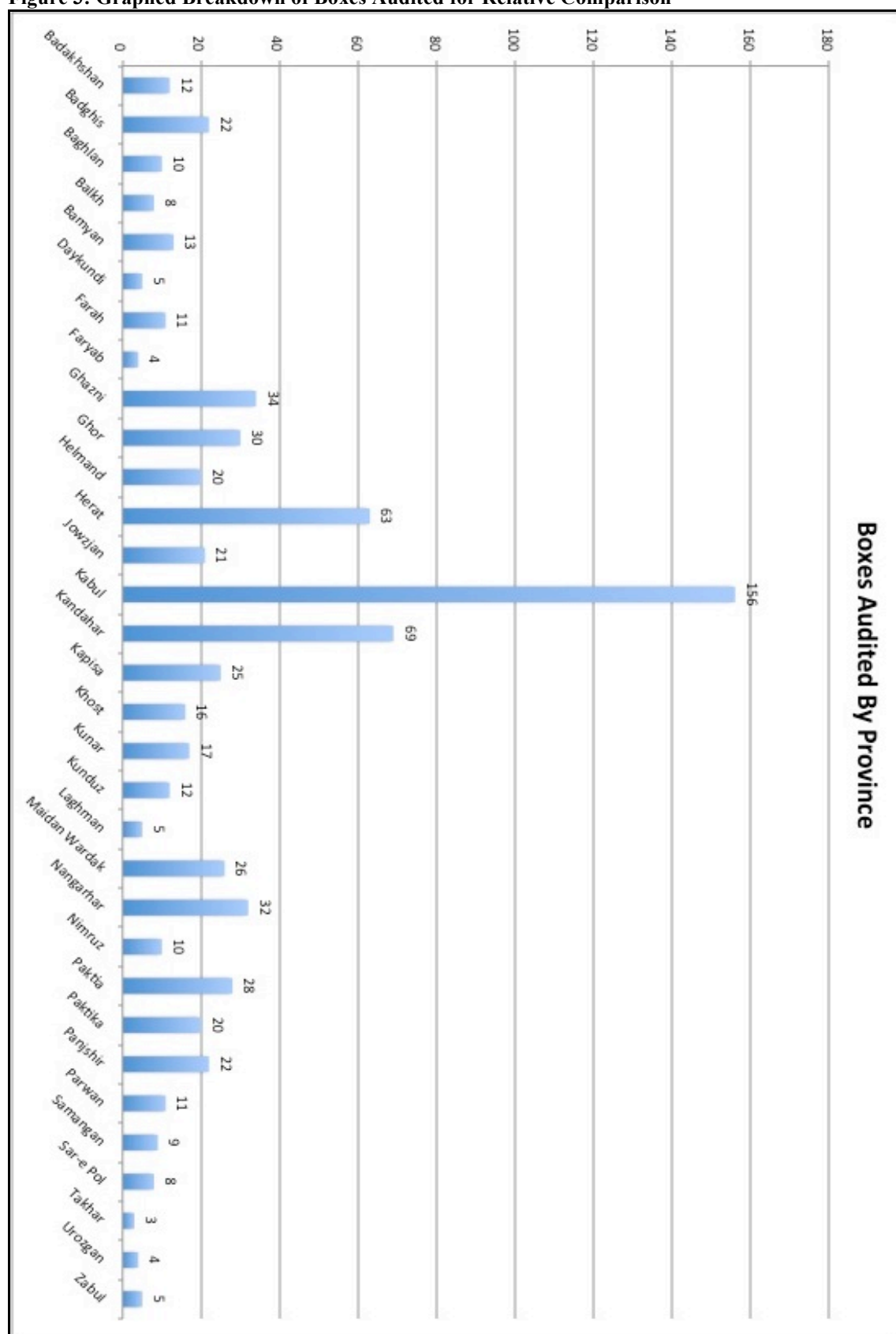
Province	Boxes Audited	% Of Total Boxes
Badakhshan	12	1.64%
Badghis	22	3.01%
Baghlan	10	1.37%
Balkh	8	1.09%
Bamyan	13	1.78%
Daykundi	5	0.68%
Farah	11	1.50%
Faryab	4	0.55%
Ghazni	34	4.65%
Ghor	30	4.10%
Helmand	20	2.74%
Herat	63	8.62%
Jowzjan	21	2.87%
Kabul	156	21.34%
Kandahar	69	9.44%
Kapisa	25	3.42%
Khost	16	2.19%
Kunar	17	2.33%
Kunduz	12	1.64%
Laghman	5	0.68%
Maidan Wardak	26	3.56%
Nangarhar	32	4.38%
Nimruz	10	1.37%
Paktia	28	3.83%
Paktika	20	2.74%
Panjshir	22	3.01%
Parwan	11	1.50%
Samangan	9	1.23%
Sar-e Pol	8	1.09%
Takhar	3	0.41%
Urozgan	4	0.55%
Zabul	5	0.68%
Total	731	100.00%

boxes ANFREL observed is fairly representative of the country as a whole but certainly not exactly so. The less than perfect distribution can be seen in facts such as ANFREL observing audits in 32 of 34 provinces. At the tables where ANFREL was observing, no ballot boxes came from either Logar or Nuristan. Both are provinces with relatively small populations so the fact that no boxes were audited from those areas is not entirely surprising. Figures 1 & 2 provide the province-by-province breakdown of ANFREL's sampling, in total quantity and as a percentage.

In terms of the challenge of ensuring perfectly representative data, it's also worth noting that the election and the audit itself, with factors such as the fluctuating pace, the audit's quick start, as well as the use of "special scrutiny" ensured that some of the data will be skewed by ANFREL's joining in progress, provinces where fraud was expected being labeled as "special scrutiny" being slower, etc. Still, on the whole, we believe it's safe to say that ANFREL's data reflects well the audit itself, mirroring the changes that took place during the audit, its unique features such as special scrutiny, the increased pace towards the end in a rush to finish it, etc.

Regarding variation between provinces, ANFREL's findings confirmed the generally held belief that certain provinces were more problematic than others. As one might expect, a very general trend was also observed between major cities and more rural areas, where those boxes from, for example, Kabul, were fairly quick and generally without too many problems but boxes from more rural locales tended to take longer to audit due to various issues with the condition of the boxes.

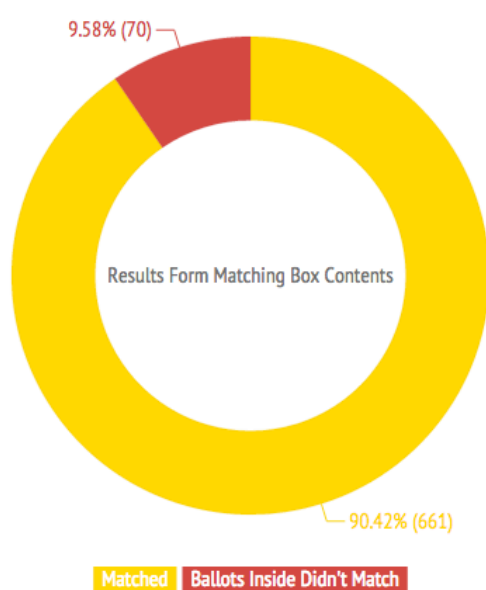
Figure 3: Graphed Breakdown of Boxes Audited for Relative Comparison



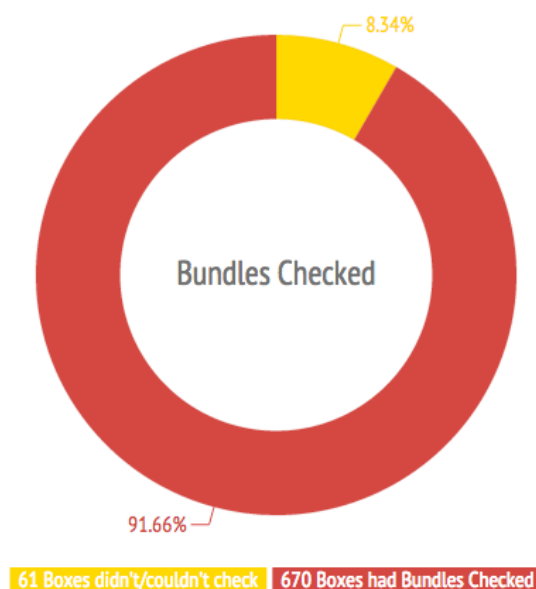
Inadequate Training

A thread ANFREL found in both the implementation of the audit itself as well as the findings of the audit was the need for more training. On training for the audit itself, because such an exercise is unlikely to repeat itself, actual additional training for that staff on audit procedures of the past is probably not worthwhile at this point. More relevant to learn are the lessons from trying to implement an audit before doing proper training. These shortcomings inevitably damaged the credibility of the audit in ways both real and perceived. Training shortcomings can and likely did contribute to a lack of

Blue Results Form Matching Actual Ballots in Box -Based on 731 Boxes Audited



Do the auditors open the bundles and check each ballot paper?



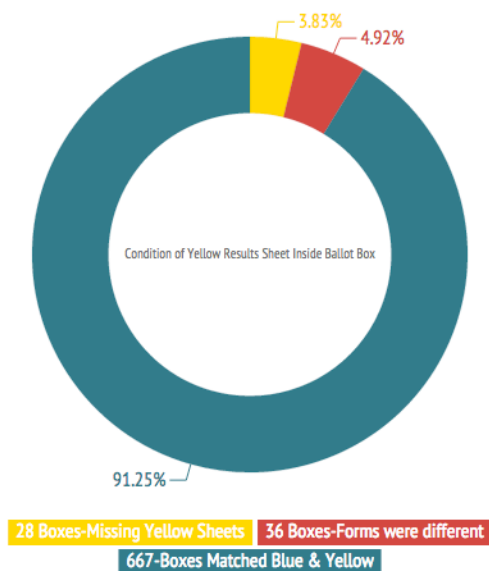
clarity and perceived confidence in procedures among candidate agents and observers, something that could have contributed to the conflicts between candidate agents.

Inconsistent & Arbitrary Audit Procedures

It should be said that, when discussing all these matters, ANFREL appreciates the pressure faced by the IEC and the UNDP to launch the audit in a short amount of time and on what was a likely unforeseen scale. ANFREL nevertheless found troubling the arbitrary nature of some decision-making and the lack of uniformity in audit procedures found between audit units. ANFREL found a significant inconsistency between the exact

procedures and methods carried out by both IEC and UN staff. Whereas the auditors' level

Does the Yellow result sheet inside the ballot box match with the original Blue results form copy?



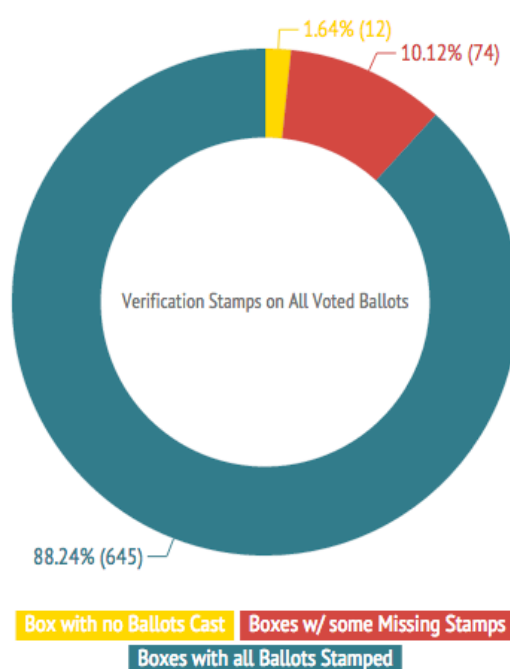
of understanding the process did not reach its' full potential, the advisors seemed to also lack a clear understanding of the procedures and protocols in terms of checking similar markings on the ballot papers.

ANFREL's team consistently found issues with a lack of training or time, rather than any ill intent on the part of the audit implementers, to be a primary problem facing the audit. Thankfully, such inconsistency was seemingly not usually done with ill intent; rather it was more a reflection of a lack of adequate training. With many staff receiving very little instruction before they

were thrust into their roles, the amount of inconsistency and irregular implementation of audit procedures present was to be somewhat expected.

The changes in audit procedures, the changing threshold for similar markings being but one example, amplified the existing lack of training issue. Such changes often seemed to happen on the fly, or were based on decisions made late at night with little time before their planned implementation the next morning. The fluid nature of the audit and the hurried start also contributed to rulemaking on the fly and an ever-evolving set of audit rules and procedures. Much of the blame for this goes to the political actors that agreed to start an audit before the rules of the game had been fully decided

Do all ballot papers cast have a verification stamp on the back?



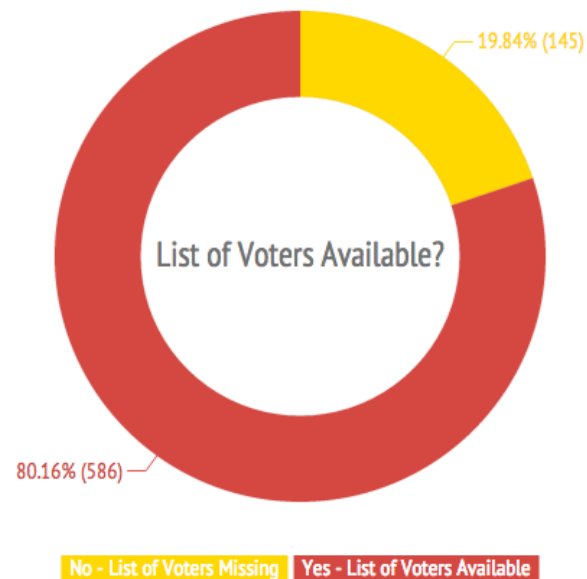
upon but it all nevertheless contributed to the arbitrary and ad-hoc feeling of the audit itself.

In addition to the lack of appropriate training time, ANFREL's observers reported that the issues of arbitrariness and a lack of uniformity seemed to stem from a failure to fully think through the procedures and decide on best practices ahead of time, a problem that, like the lack of training, was inevitably exacerbated by the rushed start of the audit. A good example of this is something that was particularly unclear to audit staff, that is, who exactly had the final say over invalidation of ballots

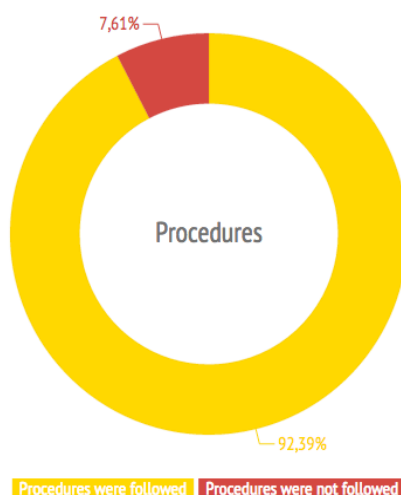
found to have similar markings. Early in the audit, the practice seemed to vary from table to table, with the IEC having final decision-making power and the UN playing but an advisory role at some tables. Later in the audit, this flipped and the UN issued similar markings guidelines and took final decision-making power.

This need for greater training was also revealed in ANFREL's findings from the ballot boxes themselves, where polling station staff often seemed to have been unable to follow proper procedures.

Is the List of Voters Available in Box?



Did the staff follow all the procedures?

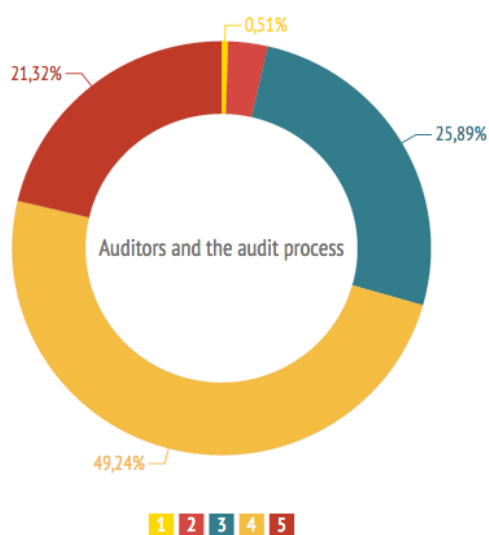


Training for Polling Station Staff

In addition to audit staff benefiting from more training, the audit's results indicate a need for more training for Polling Station officials. The need for a more professional staff is evident in several areas. As the figure below indicates, the level of the audit staff's understanding of the process is not ideal. Thus, the average could be potentially higher if polling personnel are properly trained to follow and

recognize the procedures of the audit. Obvious reasons include the prevalence of fraud, where those found guilty of fraud should be removed from their position with the remaining

Auditors' level of understanding the process on average was 3,88.

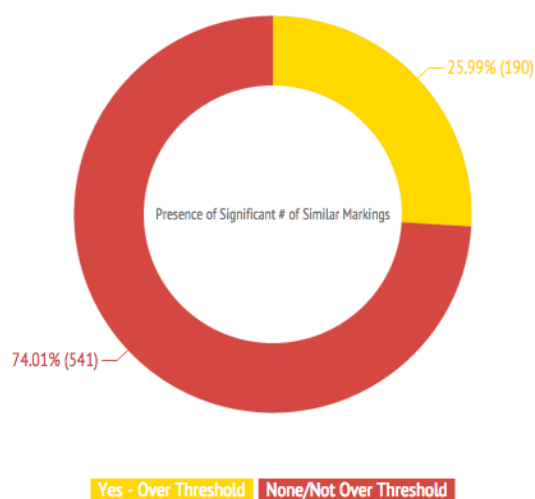


issue, like many of the irregularities observed, where it is impossible to identify the exact and entire cause of the problem. Journals could be missing as an attempt to cover-up irregularities correctly noted at the Polling Station and recorded in the Journal or they could be missing because the local staff did not follow procedures properly. The reality for most issues is probably a mix of both. What seems likely however is that a lack of professional staff resulted in a significant number of these kind of shortcomings. ANFREL hopes that, after those staff persons found to have committed fraud are removed from their posts, the IEC conducts thorough, professional training programs for its entire staff before 2015's parliamentary elections.

staff nevertheless benefiting from more training on avoiding fraud, explaining the importance of clean elections, etc. In addition, unauthorized personnel present at the audit affect the transparency of the procedure and might contribute to the possibility of conducting fraud in the audit.

But the need for more training is also evident in more mundane but nevertheless important areas. Among them, possibly harmless issues like missing Polling Station Journals where a simple lack of good training or capacity by polling station staff likely resulted in almost 13% of journals missing. This is an

Is there any identical or significant pattern of the same markings on ballots(over threshold to trigger additional scrutiny)?



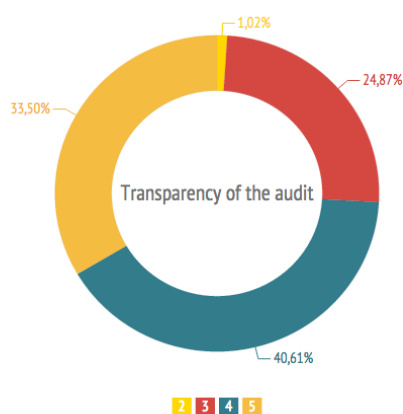
Transparency & Process

Regarding the transparency of the audit, ANFREL understands the desire for pragmatic short-term decision-making but it still holds true that transparency must remain a sacrosanct principle within the Afghan electoral process. Although the layout of the physical conduct of the audit allowed a transparent observation of the process, the principle must apply to the overall process as well, every aspect of its component parts. It is particularly relevant in regard to the public's access to audit results, and the violation of that principle in the case for the negotiated agreement to keep secret the detailed results of

the audit. Transparency remains a best practice regardless of whom results favor and regardless of whether the issue is the release of audit results or the transparency of many of the other internal processes within the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission. Despite the fact that the average of the level of the transparency of the audit was relatively high (4,06), public confidence in the election system should be rebuilt on a foundation where the public's right to information cannot be negotiated away.

Figure 5: Level of Transparency as rated by Observers on a 1(Very Bad) to 5(Very Good) scale

Level of transparency of average was 4,06.



Does the layout allow a transparent observation of the audit?

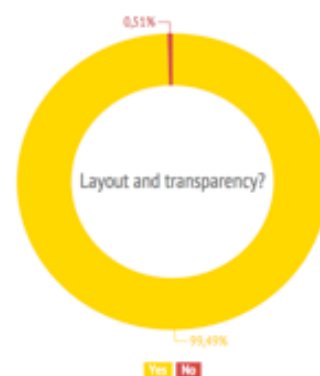


Figure 4: Transparency of physical audit largely seen as not as issue

Apart from the physical audit in the hangars, ANFREL was disappointed with the rather opaque and perfunctory nature of many of the IEC meetings, where actual deliberations and decision-making meetings were usually behind closed doors. The IEC held a series of "decision making meetings" where they the expectation was they would discuss and come to decisions about findings from the audit. The reality is that the events were more akin to press conferences where they simply announced decisions that had already been made. The 'meetings' showed none of the internal decision making process or any debate that may have taken place within the commission. They were roundly criticized by

both candidates' representatives for being mostly void of content and doing little more than a press release could have.

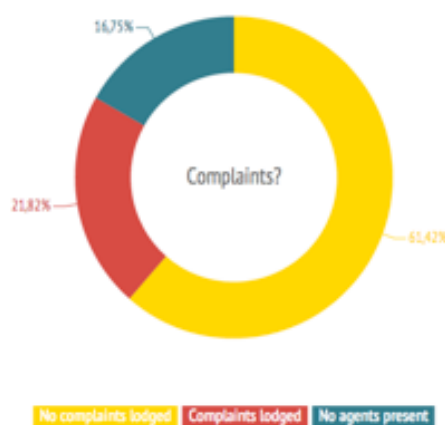
As a general principle, the integrity of the election is affected not only by the transparent management of ballots but also by the transparency of the IEC and of the process as a whole. A transparent approach should include decision-making meetings where Polling Stations were invalidated and planning sessions where invalidation criteria were determined. Going forward, the IEC's developing an far-reaching institutional transparency, in the form of openness to observers, the media, and candidates will go a long way in determining whether the IEC can fully regain the public's trust. ANFREL hopes that such measures to enhance transparency will be part of the promised electoral reform commission's recommendations.

Inherent Limitations & Unrealistic Expectations

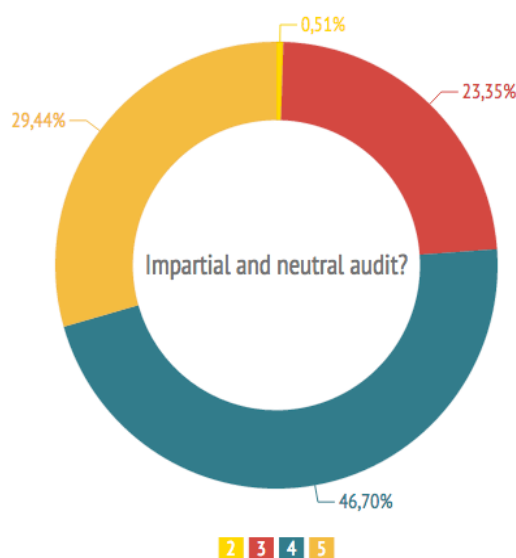
Unfortunately, outsized promises about the complete ballot audit created unrealistic expectations that prior results could be fully "cleaned" by the audit process. But given the audit methods and tools available and the massive quantity of voters in the election, such a full cleaning was never possible. No matter how well such processes were implemented, an audit such as this could not have filtered out all of the fraud present in the runoff election and promises that it could do so undermined the audit from the start. Such unfairly heightened expectations set the audit up to be portrayed as a disappointing or failed initiative in a way that does a disservice to many of the hardworking IEC, UNDP, candidates agents, and observers working in the hangars.

The work of the audit and conducting

Were any complaints lodged?

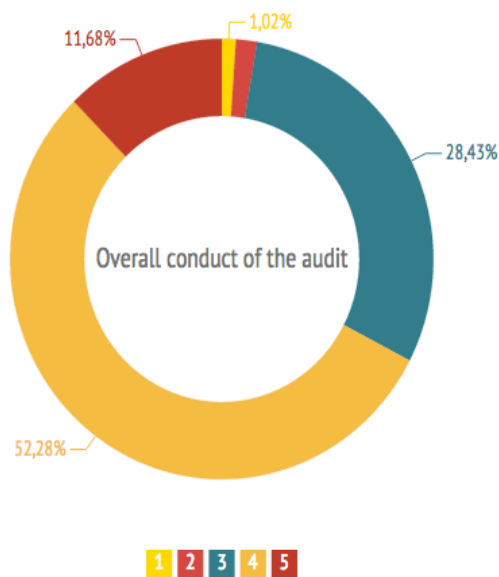


Impartiality and neutrality of the audit on average was 4,05.



much significant forensic investigation of possible voter fraud was limited by the absence of a voter's list and reliable population data in Afghanistan. The audit, just as the election had, suffered from the lack of such data and ANFREL, as we have done since 2004, continues to strongly recommend the implementation of a voter's list. Doing so will provide a longer term and more robust solution to eliminating voter fraud.

The average of the overall conduct of the audit was 3,57.



Conclusions & Recommendations

ANFREL hopes that important electoral lessons can be learned from the successes and failures of the recent audit process. Given the recent electoral crisis and with parliamentary elections due in 2015, now is the time for a thorough investigation and prosecution of electoral wrongdoing coupled with far reaching electoral reform. Part of that investigation should include a transparent and independent fact finding effort to review the election's shortcomings. Whether this is a part of the promised electoral reform commission or a separate complementary body, it's important to take action while the issues remain fresh and adequate political will exists for a proper investigation.

Afghanistan's extended 2014 Presidential election revealed many problems and opportunities for improvement. ANFREL appreciates that infusing elections with integrity is a long arduous process often requiring many years of struggle and a slow consolidation of democracy in other sectors of the country. The lessons of 2014 should not be wasted when the just concluded Election can instead be used as a catalyst for true reform and electoral progress.

1) Conduct a voter registration that would coincide with the creation of an accurate voter list that would allow the IEC to apportion Polling Stations appropriately, and would prevent and allow for better detection of fraud. Issuing tamper proof biometric identification cards during this process will also prevent much of the ID fraud seen during the runoff. Registration should be passive, where every citizen is registered automatically with a constantly updated voter's list.

2) Build stronger, more professional, and more transparent institutions in the form of an IEC and IECC which receive more training and professional development and have the capacity to conduct their own dispute resolution and detect fraud without massive intervention from candidates and outsiders. Electoral bodies that act proactively to detect and eliminate fraud will re-earn the trust of the public.

3) Infuse the IEC and IECC with greater transparency at all levels. This includes posting granular, detailed, and machine-readable election data online, including but not limited to, the results of this year's runoff and audit. It is still not too late to set an example of transparency for the future and public scrutiny, even if it includes some criticism, is a better outcome than secrecy and the inevitable mistrust that follows.

4) Build more walls of separation and independence in the nominating and budgeting processes for the IEC and IECC because leaders of these institutions can act more independently if they are more insulated from political pressure. The audit saw a great deal of political pressure coming from actors inside and outside Afghanistan and the electoral bodies were often unable to properly ignore some of this pressure, a result which had a deleterious impact on the audit itself. Nominating and budgeting processes that are more separated from the political process will help these institutions grow into truly independent bodies.

5) Investigate and Prosecute to the fullest extent of the law those guilty of election fraud. Ending fraud in the future will partly depend on ending the culture of impunity surrounding election fraud that exists at present. Vigorous investigations and prosecutions will go a long way towards beginning

to hold the guilty accountable.

6) Nationwide Voter education programs will build confidence and understanding in the election process. Doing so will not only have a positive impact on turnout at next year's elections, including badly needed participation of women, it will also help more people understand elections as a means of conflict resolution, make fraud more difficult in the future, and lessen the amount of disenfranchisement that takes place in the form of invalid votes, etc.

Appendices

Observer List

#	Name	Nationality	Email
1	Pongsak Chan-on, Mr.	Thai	pongsak@anfrel.org
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Mission Timeline

14 June	RUNOFF ELECTION DAY
14-28 June	Vote counting for Runoff Presidential election
02 July	Announcement of Preliminary Results of Runoff
07 July	IEC announces preliminary results of the 2014 Presidential Election run-off
12 July	Political Agreement for Full Audit of all 8.1 million ballots
17 July	IEC starts the physical audit of all ballots on 17 with the process observed by candidate agents, domestic and international observers, and with the technical support of the UN. The audit begins without key invalidation and trigger mechanisms agreed to; a scenario which leads to many suspensions and delays in the process
25 July	ANFREL's advance team arrives in Kabul
31 July	Audit suspended for the 4th time after the IEC'S initial plan to start on the 3rd day of Eid. It is planned to start on the 2nd August with full attendance from both candidates' teams as well as domestic and international observers
04-05 August	The bulk of ANFREL team arrives in Kabul
05 August	~2,100 out of almost 23000 have been audited to date
16 August	Beginning of Special Scrutiny of 3,000 Boxes (6,000 total – those already audited) chosen by each candidate
01 Sept.	Extension of ANFREL Audit Observation Begins for a term of two weeks or until end of audit
04 Sept.	IEC completes the physical audit of all ballot boxes in hangars, processes remaining include entry of audit results into the system, and decisions of the Commission with respect to audit findings, followed by IECC investigation
11 Sept.	Last of ANFREL team members leave Kabul
21 Sept.	IEC announces end to election, declaring Dr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai as winner & Candidates sign a deal for government of national unity
29 Sept.	President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai Sworn in followed by Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah

ANFREL Post-Audit Press Statement



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For Immediate Release: ANFREL Statement on the Conclusion to Afghanistan's Ballot Audit

Election & Audit Shortcomings Must be Springboard for Electoral Reforms

BANGKOK, 29 SEPTEMBER 2014 – The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) Foundation is encouraged by the recent political agreement in Afghanistan and wants to congratulate the people of Afghanistan for their participation in the political transition in the country. Great respect and admiration is due to those determined citizens who voted in the face of significant and at times life threatening obstacles to doing so. Despite months of delays, threats, and uncertainty, Afghans showed remarkable patience with the electoral process.

With a new administration inaugurated today, ANFREL hopes that important electoral lessons can be learned from the successes and failures of the recent audit process. Given the recent electoral crisis and parliamentary elections due in 2015, now is the time for a thorough investigation and prosecution of electoral wrongdoing coupled with far reaching electoral reform. Part of that investigation should include a transparent and independent fact finding effort to review the election's shortcomings. Whether this is a part of the promised electoral reform commission or a separate complementary body, it's important to take action while the issues remain fresh and adequate political will exists for a proper investigation.

Regarding the state of the audit, in particular the negotiated agreement to keep secret the detailed results of the audit, ANFREL understands the desire for pragmatic short-term decision-making but at the same time believes that transparency must remain a sacrosanct principle within the Afghan electoral process. The need for transparency holds true regardless of whom results favor and regardless of whether the issue is the release of audit results or the transparency of many of the other internal processes within the Independent Election Commission(IEC) and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission. "Public confidence in the election system must be rebuilt on a foundation of transparency, where the public's right to information cannot be negotiated away," ANFREL's Chairman Mr. Damaso Magbual stated.

Similarly, adequate dispute resolution mechanisms must be built up to deal with allegations of fraud in the future. Such institutions professional performance can strengthen public confidence and the perception of electoral justice among those alleging fraud in the future. Proper dispute resolution mechanisms can lessen the need for the type of crisis diverting audit agreed to in Afghanistan. They are especially necessary in light of the audit process and its impact, both of which ANFREL found to have significant shortcomings.

Unfortunately, outsized promises about the complete ballot audit created unrealistic expectations that prior results could be fully "cleaned" by the audit process. But given the audit methods and tools available and the massive quantity of voters in the election, such a full cleaning was never possible. No matter how well such processes were implemented, an audit such as this could not have filtered out all of the fraud present in the runoff election and promises that it could do so undermined the audit from the start. Such unfairly heightened expectations set the audit up to be portrayed as a disappointing or failed initiative in a way that does a disservice to many of the hardworking IEC, UNDP, candidates agents, and observers working in the hangars.

The work of the audit and conducting much significant forensic investigation of possible voter fraud was limited by the absence of a voter's list and reliable population data in Afghanistan. The audit, just as the

Afghanistan – FEFA; **Bangladesh** – FEMA, ODHAKAR; **Cambodia** – COMFREL, NICFEC; **East Timor** – Women Caucus; **Indonesia** – KIPP, JPPR; **Japan** – InterBand; **Mongolia** – Women for Social Progress (WSP); **Nepal** – NEOC, NEMA; **Pakistan** – FAFEN; **Philippines** – IPER, PPCRV, NAMFREL; **South Korea** – PSPD; **Sri Lanka** – PAFFREL; **Taiwan** – CCW; **Thailand** – Poll Watch Foundation

election had, suffered from the lack of such data and ANFREL, as we have done since 2004, continues to strongly recommend the implementation of a voter's list. Doing so will provide a longer term and more robust solution to eliminating voter fraud.

On the issue of the conduct of the audit itself, ANFREL recognizes the intense pressure faced by the IEC and the UNDP to launch the audit in a short amount of time and on what was a likely unforeseen scale. ANFREL nevertheless found troubling the arbitrary nature of some decision-making and the lack of uniformity in audit procedures found between audit units. To compound the problem, the fluid nature of the audit and the hurried start also contributed to rulemaking on the fly and an ever-evolving set of audit rules and procedures. Much of the blame for this goes to the political actors that agreed to start an audit before the rules of the game had been fully decided upon but it all nevertheless contributed to the arbitrary and ad-hoc feeling of the audit itself. ANFREL's observers reported that issues of arbitrariness and a lack of uniformity seemed to stem from a failure to fully think through the procedures and decide on best practices ahead of time as well as a lack of proper training, both problems exacerbated by the rushed start to the audit. ANFREL's team consistently found issues with a lack of training or time, rather than any ill intent on the part of the audit implementers, to be a primary problem facing the audit.

This need for greater training was also revealed in ANFREL's findings from the ballot boxes themselves, where polling station staff often seemed to have been unable to follow proper procedures. ANFREL hopes that, after those staff found to have committed fraud are removed from their posts, the IEC conducts thorough professional training programs for its entire staff before 2015's parliamentary elections.

Outside of the hangars, ANFREL was disappointed with the rather opaque and perfunctory nature of many of the IEC meetings, where deliberations seemed lacking and decision-making meetings were often behind closed doors. The integrity of the election is affected not only by the transparent management of ballots but by the transparency of the IEC and of the process as a whole. This should include decision-making meetings where Polling Stations were invalidated and planning sessions where invalidation criteria were determined. Going forward, the IEC's institutional transparency, in the form of openness to observers, the media, and candidates will go a long way in determining whether the IEC can fully regain the public's trust. ANFREL hopes that such measures to enhance transparency will be part of the promised electoral reform commission's recommendations.

Afghanistan's extended 2014 Presidential election revealed many problems and opportunities for improvement. ANFREL appreciates that infusing elections with integrity is a long arduous process often requiring many years of struggle and a slow consolidation of democracy in other sectors of the country. The lessons of 2014 should not be wasted when the just concluded Election can instead be used as a catalyst for true reform and electoral progress.

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