



Candidate Nomination Begins



Left to right: JEMBS Chief of Operations Richard Atwood fields questions about candidate symbols. Political party representatives listen at the Political Party Consultative Forum. Candidate Nomination press conference held on 25 April.

Representatives from nearly 40 political parties and members of the NGO and diplomatic communities learned more about the Candidate Nomination process at the JEMB Political Parties Consultative Forum held Wednesday, 19 April at Karwan Sara.

Members of the JEMB and the JEMB Secretariat Chief of Operations Richard Atwood fielded questions about the use of candidate symbols, a source of great concern among Forum participants. Political party representatives feared that the use of symbols would cause confusion among voters. JEMB Commissioners explained that symbols have been introduced to enable the significant number of illiterate voters to identify the candidate they wish to elect.

Political parties' representatives also expressed concern about the role of political parties under the current electoral sys-

tem, the Single Non-Transferable Vote. Under this system, candidates will stand for election as individuals; however, they may campaign with the support of their political party. At the time of application, prospective candidates will be asked if they would like to be affiliated with a particular party. The JEMB Secretariat will endeavor to conduct information campaigns in order to make voters aware of candidates' party affiliation.

The fortnightly Political Parties Consultative Forum keeps political party representatives abreast of developments regarding the electoral process. The Forum also provides the JEMB an opportunity for exchange: to engage parties in dialogue about their concerns, incorporate their suggestions and consider their recommendations in administrative procedures.

Continued on Page 2

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.

CANDIDATE NOMINATION

The Candidate Nomination process will provide Afghan citizens the opportunity to stand as candidates in either the Wolesi Jirga or Provincial Council elections.

The Candidate Nomination period will take place from 30 April to 19 May 2005. During that time, prospective candidates are required to visit the Candidate Nomination Office, located in each of the 34 provinces, in the province in which they wish to contest in order to apply for candidacy.

Prospective candidates will be asked to submit:

- **Voter Registration Card.** Those who are not yet registered at the time of application will be allowed to do so.
- A completed **Candidate Application Form** in Dari or Pashto.
- A **list of supporters**, which includes the voter's name, voter ID number and signature in support of the applicant's candidacy.
- A **deposit**, which will be returned if the candidate is elected or receives more than two percent of the votes cast for the given constituency. The deposit is 10,000 Afghanis for Wolesi Jirga and 4,000 Afghanis for Provincial Council elections.



Above: Members of the local community study Vacancy Announcements outside of the Panjshir provincial office. Right: Candidate Nomination requirements are publically displayed outside of the Parwan provincial office.



Who can be a candidate?

An individual must:

- Be a citizen of Afghanistan or have obtained citizenship at least ten years before becoming a candidate.
- Not have been convicted of a crime against humanity or any other crime; or have been deprived of their civil rights to trial.
- Be at least 25 years old at the time of submitting the application for candidacy for the Wolesi Jirga election, and at least 18 years old for Provincial Council elections.

Additionally, a person must also comply with the following:

- Be a registered voter and be able to present their voter registration card. It will be possible for applicants who have not already registered to do so at provincial offices. Voter registration at this time will be for candidate nomination applicants only.
- Visit the JEMB Nominations Office in the province which the person wishes to represent; and submit in person a completed nomination application form.
- Present a list of individual's who support the applicant's candidacy, including names, voter ID, and signatures. These signatures must be obtained from residents of the constituency in which the applicant wishes to contest (at least 300 legitimate signatures for Wolesi Jirga and at least 200 for Provincial Council elections).
- Provide a monetary deposit that will be returned if the candidate is elected or receives more than two percent of the votes cast for the given constituency.
- Sign and abide by the Code of Conduct for Candidates, as set forth by the JEMB.

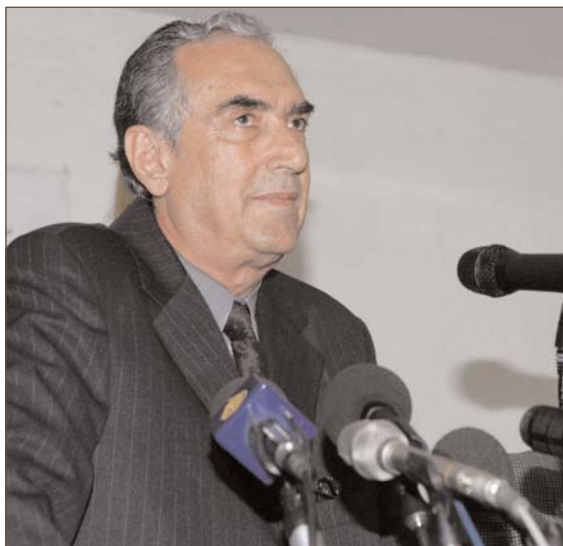
Each person can apply for candidacy in only one constituency and in one election.

Senior-level civil servants will be required to relinquish their positions prior to application for candidacy. Senior-level civil servants include:

- Electoral Officials.
- Chief Justices, members of the Supreme Court and the Attorney General.
- Ministers, Governors, District Administrators, members of the armed forces (from the Ministries of Defense and Interior Affairs, and the Department of National Security).
- Judges and attorneys.

All candidates who fulfill the eligibility criteria will be included in the Preliminary Candidate List, which will be displayed in all of the Candidate Nomination Offices from 4 to 9 June 2005. On 12 July 2005, following the Appeals and Withdrawals periods, the Final Candidate List, certified by the JEMB, will be published, including all final decisions by the Electoral Complaint Commission and the JEMB regarding candidate applications. ■

The Vice-Chairman Speaks



Whether in Kabul, Cairo, Peshawar, or Rome, four-star General Ayub Assil has dedicated his career to Afghanistan. Once a leading figure in Afghanistan's resistance movement, he is now paving the way for the country's democratic future as the Vice-Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission, the Afghan component of the JEMB.

Vice-Chairman Assil studied at the French High School of Kabul and French High School of Cairo before receiving a Bachelor's degree in Law and Police Science and a Master's degree in Penal Law from Ein Shams University in Cairo. At the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders in Tokyo, he received a diploma in Administration of Criminal Justice.

In the 1970's, Vice-Chairman Assil held a number of senior-level positions within the government administration. He served as an Advisor in the Ministry of Interior and the Director General of the Passport Office of Afghanistan. During this time, he also returned to academia - this time as a professor. He taught courses in Forensic Science and Criminal Justice at the Police Academy of Kabul and joined the Faculty of Law at Kabul University, where he continues to teach one class a week.

In 1982, the Moscow-backed government in Kabul, headed by Dr. Najibullah, asked Vice-Chairman Assil to lead a group of 5,000 Afghan pilgrims to Mecca. "The opportunity to go on Hajj, an obligation of all able Muslims and one of the five pillars of Islam, was wonderful," Assil said. "The puppet government in Kabul wanted to show the world that they were tolerant of Islam. But this was nothing but propaganda."

Rather than return to Dr. Najibullah's Kabul, Vice-Chairman Assil, accompanied by 1,500 of the inbound Hajjis, defected to Pakistan.

"All able and willing young men, about 1,500 altogether, opted to stay in Peshawar and join the Afghan Resistance," Assil said. In Peshawar, he headed the Department of Culture of the movement, which produced the English magazine, *The Front*, and the Arabic-language magazine, *Afghanistan*.

"At that time, I traveled throughout Europe and the United States," said the Vice-Chairman. In Oslo in 1983, he attended the International Healing Conference, where he spoke to participants about the devastation of war and its effect on the Afghan people. He continued on to Paris, where he spoke with then-Mayor Jacques Chirac, and on to Rome where he met with the Italian President and was invited to hold papal audience with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican.

"The Pope was a wonderful man," he said. "Very caring and compassionate. He agreed to do whatever he could to ease the suffering of the Afghan people."

Continuing on to the United States, Vice-Chairman Assil met with members of Congress and testified before the Senate on the economic and political situation in Afghanistan. He was also invited to speak to an audience at Freedom House in New York City, where he garnered assistance and support for the resistance movement.

As his country descended into civil war following the rise of the Mujahidin government in 1992, he facilitated talks between the opposing factions in attempts to broker a peaceful settlement.

In 2000, under pressure from the Taliban, Vice-Chairman Assil emigrated with his family to the United States. He returned to Kabul prior to the 2004 Presidential Election, and was appointed General Chief of the Counter-Narcotics Department. In December 2004, President Karzai appointed him Vice Chairman of the JEMB.

Having dedicated his life to the promotion of the rights and voice of the Afghan people, the 2005 National Assembly Elections are particularly important to the Vice-Chairman.

"These elections bring us one step closer to seeing an independent and democratically elected government in Afghanistan," he said. "After so much suffering, the Afghan people are finally going to be heard." ■

Provincial Perspective- the Panjshir Valley

Early this week, as the Candidate Nomination period for the 2005 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections commenced, members of the JEMBS staff in the Panjshir provincial office were traversing the hillsides on horseback.

"We heard several times that last year a lot of people weren't reached," said Mike Janssens, Provincial Logistics Coordinator. "Our goal is to change this and make sure everyone is aware this year. We will not sit here in the office and wait. We will go to the people - this is essential."

Preparation for the Candidate Nomination period in the Panjshir Valley began with Janssens' arrival on 7 April. As all electoral activities for the Valley were run out of the Parwan provincial office last year, Janssens and his colleagues had to literally build the office from the bottom up. In just three short weeks, the staff procured the necessary communications and IT equipment, vehicles, home and office furnishings and Candidate Nomination materials.

Word of the electoral staff's arrival spread quickly. "On the first morning I was here, I had two women come and inquire about how to be a candidate," said Provincial Electoral Officer Catherine Northing. "And another woman who was a civic educator last year inquired about vacancies. We were receiving visitors already while in the process of moving in."

These initial visits are not to be taken for granted, however. The staff realizes that in order to reach all corners of the Valley's seemingly inaccessible geography, there must be an intensive information campaign. "We plan to continue the public outreach campaign well into the Candidate Nomination period," said Northing. "By the end of the period, no one will be able to say to us, 'I wasn't aware that this was happening.'"

Public Outreach Officer Xortensia Lasin, or Ting as she is known by her colleagues, arrived in Panjshir ten

days ago. In this time, she has been to four districts in order to brief District Administrators, Governors, members of local shuras, and mullahs on the commencement of Candidate Nomination and related procedures.

"We have been working hard to get the information out," said Lasin. "Mapping villages to build our list of contacts, posting fact sheets on shop windows, hospitals, gas stations, schools, and restaurants. Even our

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drivers are joining in the effort - posting flyers on their way in and out of the valley."

At the time of interview, just three days prior to the launch of the Candidate Nomination period, Lasin and her colleagues were in the process of recruiting individuals for a number of key positions such as national civic educators, trainers, counterparts and a Small Grant Program liaison. Once fully staffed, the Panjshir provincial office will employ six internationals and more than 50 Afghan staff. After several days of interviews, a number of candidates had been selected to receive offers.

"During interviews, several applicants mentioned that their interest in the position stemmed from the will to

Left: Provincial Electoral Officer Catherine Northing at the Panjshir provincial office.

Right: International Provincial Training Officer Zahid Haider explains Candidate Nomination procedures to National Training Coordinator Abdul Manon and National Training Officer Suhaila Satari.



see democracy take root in Afghanistan," said Northing. "One of the interview questions is, 'Why do you want to work for the JEMB?' And the response quite often is, 'If you've come all the way here [from abroad] to do this for Afghanistan, I feel obligated to also work for my country.'"

Despite the many challenges, the staff is extremely dedicated to the project. "National staff members see us here until late and stay long past quitting time too," said Janssens. "Its more than a job - it's a project that everyone feels a vested interest in seeing succeed."

National Administration and Finance Officer Abdullah Azizi shares this sentiment. "Panjshiris are sick of war," Azizi said. "My aim is to have a peaceful country. Since I was born, there has only been war in my country. I myself am sick of war, tired of violence. I want peace and this is my opportunity to do something. That is why I am working day and night - like last night until 9pm."



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Although the first time that many Panjshiris have cast a ballot was for their President in 2004, the staff has expressed amazement over the level the electorate's cognizance of the meaning of these elections and their commitment to the process.

"There is a fighting spirit in this valley," said Northing. "That is why I anticipate we will have many people walking through our office doors. That is what we've been working toward-- it's what we are here for." ■



Top: National Administration and Finance Officer Abdullah Azizi putting in long hours. Middle: A view of the spectacular Panjshir Valley. Bottom: On the Panjshir provincial office compound.

Candidate symbols: “Chance and Choice”

Both candidates in campaigning and voters in the process of casting ballots benefit from the use of symbols. The JEMB has determined that it is necessary to allocate symbols to candidates for the 2005 elections. Symbols are used in elections in a number of countries with high levels of illiteracy. Symbols are used to identify candidates during campaigning and on the ballot.

As was the case in the 2004 presidential election, a photograph of each candidate will appear on the ballot next to the candidate's name. This visible marker is necessary for illiterate members of the voting constituency. In order to eliminate any confusion that may be incurred while visually scanning hundreds of visages for the correct candidate, the JEMB has decided that each contestant will select a symbol to appear next to their name and photograph on the ballot paper.

It is vital that voters are able to identify their candidate quickly on Election Day. If not, large queues may form outside polling centres, discouraging participation. For these reasons, the JEMB has decided that symbols will be allocated to candidates during the candidate nomination period and that the symbol will appear next to the candidate's name and photograph. A digital copy of the symbol can be used for campaigning.

In most constituencies, each candidate will have a single symbol, unique to their candidacy; however, in larger provinces, candidates may have double or triple symbols. For example, one candidate may run with one bicycle, a second candidate with two bicycles and a third candidate with three bicycles. In the largest constituency, Kabul, the same symbols will be used for both in the Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections - save that those running for the Wolesi Jirga will use symbols framed in a square and those running for Provincial Council will use circular frames.

Airplanes, camels, kites, reading glasses, drinking glasses - inevitably there will be some symbols that will be perceived as more desirable than others. In order to provide equal opportunity for all candidates to choose, the

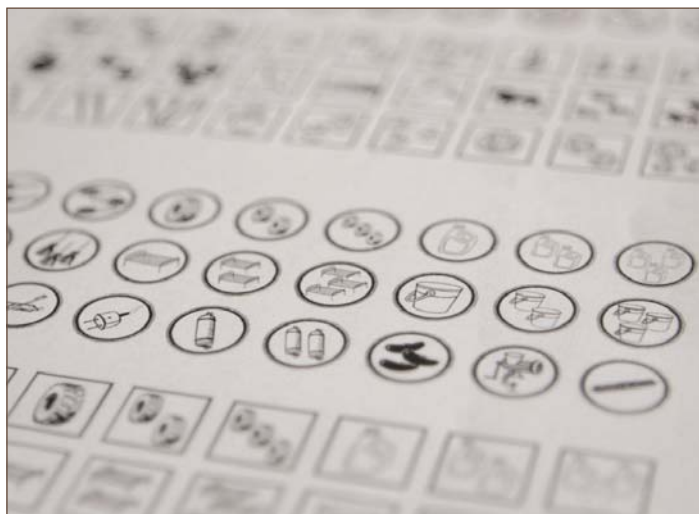
JEMB has selected a system of "chance and choice" for symbol allocation. Candidates will draw three symbols from a box and will then choose one from this lot as their unique candidate symbol. Each candidate will be given a digital copy of the symbol for use in campaign material. While symbols and photographs will be posted at each provincial JEMBS office, it is up to each candidate to familiarize their constituency with their symbol and photograph through campaigning.

Why use symbols?

- Symbols help illiterate voters to identify candidates.
- Quick and easy identification will be difficult on a large ballot that may contain a few hundred candidates.
- Recognition of symbols will decrease the amount of time a voter needs to locate a candidate on the ballot. This will ensure that queues do not get too long, thereby potentially discouraging eligible voters.
- Each candidate will receive a copy of the chosen symbol which may be used in campaign materials.

How are symbols used?

- After submitting the required forms and all necessary Candidate Nomination materials, the candidate draws three symbols in a lottery system; one symbol is selected from among these three.
- The candidate is given a CD copy of the symbol, along with his/her digital photograph. This copy may be reproduced to be used on campaigning materials.



Left: A sampling of candidate symbols. Right: JEMBS staff Walid Bashir displays his chosen symbols in an enactment of the Candidate Nomination process at the 25 April Press Conference at JEMB Headquarters.

Meet the Press...

PRESS RELEASE • APRIL 30 2005

SEAT DISTRIBUTIONS FOR WOLESI JIRGA AND PROVINCIAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Based on population figures provided by the Government of Afghanistan's Central Statistics Office, the Joint Electoral Management Body has distributed seats in the Wolesi Jirga, the Lower House of the National Assembly, among Afghanistan's 34 provinces.

Elections for the 249 seats of the Wolesi Jirga (House of the People) and for Provincial Councils will be held in each province on September 18, 2005. Each province represents a single constituency of the Wolesi Jirga.

Ten of the Wolesi Jirga's 249 seats have been reserved for the Kuchi (nomad) community, in accordance with the Electoral Law enacted by Presidential Decree on Wednesday April 27.

The remaining 239 seats have been distributed among the provinces, in accordance with Electoral Law stipulations that seats be distributed in proportion to the size of each province's population and that each province have at least two seats.

Under the Electoral Law, Wolesi Jirga seats are allocated to provinces in the following manner:

a. The total population of provinces is divided by the total number of seats to be allocated to provinces (239) to determine the seat allocation quota;

b. The population of each province is divided by the seat allocation quota.

Women are guaranteed representation in the Wolesi Jirga through a number of reserved seats.

"Provinces with the largest population have been allocated the largest number of Wolesi Jirga seats. Those with the smaller populations have been allocated less seats," said JEMB Chairman, Bissmillah Bissmil.

The number of seats for each Provincial Council has also been determined in relation to the size of the population. In accordance with the Electoral Law, at least one quarter of the seats in each Provincial Council will be allocated to female candidates.

"I urge Afghan citizens who wish to run for election to either the Wolesi Jirga or Provincial Council to nominate themselves as candidates over the coming three weeks starting April 30," said the JEMB Chairman.

Aspiring candidates have until May 19 to gather and present the details of their supporters (names, signatures and voter ID numbers) at the Candidate Nomination office in the province they wish to represent.

For further information about all press releases, please consult our website www.jemb.org or contact JEMB International Spokesperson Bronwyn Curran: bronwync@unops.org.af.

PRESS RELEASE • MAY 1 2005

CANDIDATE NOMINATION PERIOD BEGINS

Afghans across the country have begun offering themselves as candidates in their country's first post-conflict legislative and Provincial Council elections.

The Candidate Nomination process for the September 18 Wolesi Jirga (House of the People) and Provincial Council elections opened on Saturday in all 34 provincial capitals.

A total of 31 people across Afghanistan submitted their candidate nomination papers on the first day of the three-week Candidate Nomination period.

On Saturday, 26 people nationwide, including six women, nominated themselves as candidates for the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of the National Assembly). Another five people submitted candidacies for the Provincial Council elections.

Hundreds more Afghans including members of the Kuchi (nomad) community turned up to Candidate Nomination offices across Afghanistan to collect Candidate Nomination kits.

"The Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB) is very encouraged by the strong level of interest already visible on the first day," said JEMB Chairman Bissmillah Bissmil.

"We are particularly pleased to see six women already step forward to submit applications to become Wolesi Jirga candidates. I urge more Afghan women to follow their lead. Afghan citizens who meet the criteria and wish to represent their people should take advantage of these coming three weeks to collect the details of your supporters and submit your candidate nomination papers."

JEMB Candidate Nomination offices are open in every provincial capital from 8.00 am to 4.00 pm, Saturdays to Thursdays, until May 19.

"The Candidate Nomination process is the first big step towards the Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections," said Chief Electoral Officer Peter Erben.

"This is a very important opportunity for Afghans to participate in the future of their land, by either running as a candidate, or deciding to support someone as a candidate."

Candidate Nomination figures will be regularly updated on the JEMB website.

A preliminary list of candidates will be publicized from June 4 to 9, during which challenges may be made against candidates who do not meet eligibility criteria. After adjudication of these challenges and a five-day appeal period, the final list will be certified by the JEMB and made public on July 12.

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...

- After thorough review of the 2004 Electoral Law passed by the Afghan government last year in collaboration with the JEMBS, the Cabinet passed the amended document and sent it to the President's office where it was signed into law.
- Consolidated population figures were made public by the Central Statistics Office, thereby allowing for the finalization of seat distribution (for more information, see press briefing on page 7).
- A press conference was held to announce the coming Candidate Nomination period at the JEMB compound on Monday, 25 April. An international stakeholders meeting was also held on Wednesday, 27 April, which focused on the newly passed Electoral Law, Candidate Nomination and project funding status. Fortnightly meetings are conducted to ensure transparency.
- The Public Outreach Department continues to spread the word about Candidate Nomination through radio, television and newspaper spots, including programs on "Good Morning Afghanistan."
- "JEMB e-News" was launched last week. JEMB e-News is a weekly electronic newsletter that will be sent out in English, Dari and Pashto to all stakeholders and interested parties in the international and Afghan community. The letter will contain the most current fact sheets, press briefings, and other related electoral materials.

Left: "To be a candidate is an opportunity to be part of the decisions that will shape the future of this country. Submit your application forms to your JEMB provincial office."

Right: The Candidate Nomination package.

کاندید شدن فرصتی است
برای سهم گیری
در تعیین آینده کشور!

نامزدی کاندیدان برای انتخابات ولسی جرگه
و شوراهای ولایتی سال ۱۳۸۴ از تاریخ
۱۰ ثور الی ۲۹ ثور سال روان صورت میگیرد.

برای نامزد شدن بجهت کاندید، درخواست های
تانرا به شعبه نامزدی واقع در دفاتر ولایتی
انتخابات دارالانشای
دفتر مشترک تنظیم انتخابات بسپارید.

ای هیئت ولسی جرگه افغانستان

Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council Elections 2005	
Financial Status as of 30 April, 2005	
Received (funds transferred to UNDP)	
DONOR	AMOUNT USD
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
UK	2,873,563
Total received to date	23,518,908
Committed (agreement signed)	
DONOR	AMOUNT USD
Denmark	2,000,000
Switzerland	1,000,000
Australia	1,545,296
New Zealand	727,000
Total committed	5,272,296
Pledged (letter received)	
Total pledged	45,751,224
Total Project Budget	148,665,087
Effective Carry Over from 2004	16,027,851
Total Received 2005	23,518,908
Total Committed (agreement signed)	5,272,296
UNFUNDED (excluding pledges)	103,846,032



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/JEMBS