



***Candidate Nomination
Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council Elections
30 April – 26 May 2005***

*Period Report prepared by the
Joint Electoral Management Body
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1. Executive Summary

The end of the Candidate Nomination period marks the completion of the first phase and the first challenge of the operational calendar for the 2005 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections. The staff of the JEMBS overcame enormous obstacles posed by unforeseen security incidents, communications and infrastructure to open all 34 provincial offices on time at 08:00 on 30 April 2005.

At the closure of Nominations at 16:00 on 26 May in Nangarhar province, a total of **6,102** Afghan men and women had filed nomination papers to stand as candidates for the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of the National Assembly) and Provincial Council elections.

In 34 provinces, a total of **2,835** people had nominated themselves as Wolesi Jirga candidates, including **66** Kuchis and **344** women, of which **seven** are Kuchi women. A total of **3,201** Afghans had come forward as candidates for Provincial Councils in 34 provinces, including **285** women. Out of thirty four provinces only three did not witness sufficient female candidates nominating themselves for the Provincial Council election – Nangrahar, Zabol and Urozgan.

The Candidate Nomination period was extended beyond its original 19 May deadline after security problems forced the closure of some provincial Candidate Nomination Offices. The deadline was extended by three days in all provinces except Nangarhar, where the deadline was extended by six days to make up for the longer closure of the Candidate Nomination office in that province. Candidate Nominations resumed in Nangarhar on Wednesday, 18 May and ended at 4:00 pm Thursday, 26 May.

Despite many obstacles and challenges, including an extremely ambitious electoral timeline, difficulties with communications and technology, the limitations of the public outreach campaign, legal and procedural issues, and unforeseen security-related incidents, the Joint Electoral Management Body and its Secretariat have facilitated what should be considered a successful Candidate Nomination process.

This success is evidenced by the high turnout of both male and female candidates in almost all provinces for both Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council seats as well as representatives of the Kuchi constituency.

2. Candidate Nomination Process

The first significant operational challenge of the 2005 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections was the conduct of a complex and widespread Candidate Nomination process. It was vitally important that this process be conducted accurately as it forms the basis for much of the following electoral process. The list of candidates – to be finalised by the JEMB in mid-July – will be used as the basis for the design of the ballots for each Wolesi Jirga constituency and Provincial Council election.

Under the SNTV electoral system chosen by the government for the upcoming Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections, individuals are required to nominate themselves. Detailed discussions were undertaken to institute effective and accurate recording of candidate nomination information. Each candidate was required to submit their nomination papers in person at a JEMB Candidate Nomination Office in the province in which they wished to run. Data was recorded directly in the Candidate Nomination Database and then printed out for the candidate to confirm by signature. A quality (digital) photograph was taken for use on the ballot paper and an electronic copy of the photograph was given to the candidate for campaign purposes.

Candidates were required to submit a list of signatures of registered voters (300 signatures for Wolesi Jirga candidates; 200 for Provincial Council candidates) who supported their candidacy and a cash deposit of 10,000 Afghanis for Wolesi Jirga candidates and 4,000 for Provincial Councils candidates. In addition, each candidate was required to sign a declaration of compliance with the candidate eligibility criteria as defined in the Constitution and in the Electoral Law and the Code of Conduct for Candidates.

To assist the proportion of the population that is illiterate with the identification candidates on the ballot paper to, the JEMB developed a list of symbols to assist candidate recognition. During nomination, candidates were required to select a symbol that would then appear next to their name and photograph on the ballot paper. Through a 'chance and choice' lottery system, candidates chose three symbols at random and selected from these one single symbol to represent them.

At the start of the process, it was not clear how many candidates there might be. The JEMB Secretariat planned on accommodating as many as 5-10,000 candidates across all elections. This represented a considerable logistical and procedural challenge.

The nomination period was scheduled to run for three weeks from 30 April until 19 May. However, this period was extended when security incidents across Afghanistan caused many Candidate Nomination Offices to close for varying lengths of time. An extension of three days, until Monday 23 May, was announced across Afghanistan with the exception of Nangarhar, where a six day extension was announced, until Thursday 27 May.

At the end of the candidate nomination period, the JEMB Secretariat will compile the names of the candidates nominated to produce Preliminary Candidate Lists. These Lists will be posted from 4-9 June. Challenges can be made against candidates who are believed to be ineligible or unqualified to stand for election. The newly appointed Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) will adjudicate these challenges. Provincial Electoral Commissions (PECs), members of which are preparing to come to Kabul for a comprehensive training in early June, will be able to advise the ECC as to the eligibility of candidates after reviewing candidate nomination papers.

▪ Public Outreach

Public Outreach formed a vital component of the Candidate Nomination process. Potential candidates needed to be informed about their possibilities to stand for office, the kinds of election that were to take place and how they could go about becoming a candidate. A total of 175,000 Candidate Nomination flyers were printed and disseminated throughout Afghanistan. An additional flyer was developed and distributed in conjunction with the announcement of the extension of the Candidate Nomination period.

Progress of the Candidate Nomination process could be followed on the JEMB website www.jemb.org, where information for potential candidates was also displayed. The site welcomed more than 1,972 visitors over the course of the Candidate Nomination period – this is 67 per cent of all visitors since the site's launch.

Three Public Service Announcements (PSAs) were produced by the Message Development section; the first contained general information about the Candidate Nomination process, the second specifically targeted women, and the third concerned the extension period. These PSAs were broadcast on Aarman, Good Morning Afghanistan (GMA), Radio Television Afghanistan (RTA), Azadi, and Internews

radios. Four roundtable discussions relating to Candidate Nomination were broadcast on GMA, Equal Access and RTA. Aarman, Awaz and GMA each produced a radio drama series; the three dramas were broadcast on Aarman, GMA, RTA, Internews and Equal Access radios.

3. Candidate Nomination Progress

Candidate Nomination Offices were established in JEMB facilities in all 34 provinces of the country. A team of national and international staff were employed in each Office to undertake the nomination process. The Candidate Nomination period was closely coordinated by the Field Operations Department of the JEMBS. Daily instructions were disseminated to improve or correct operational irregularities and to collect data from the field.

With staff continually arriving during the period and infrastructure still under construction there were significant challenges. These obstacles were overcome to ensure the least disruption possible. Security, however, remained a concern throughout the process.

All Candidate Nomination Offices opened their doors to prospective candidates at 08:00 on 30 April. The operation progressed well with few reported incidents until 11 May when demonstrations erupted across Afghanistan related to the alleged desecration of the Koran at Guantanamo Bay.

▪ Security

Protests against the alleged desecration of the Koran started in Jalalabad and quickly spread to other locations. Jalalabad was most severely affected by these protests; both the JEMB regional and provincial offices in Jalalabad closed and all international staff members were temporarily relocated to Kabul. As security deteriorated in Nangarhar province, similar demonstrations erupted throughout the country causing further closure of JEMB offices.

Nangarhar province saw a suspension of candidate nomination for six days; other provinces were closed for varying lengths of time, including 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 09.30), Kapisa (closed on 12 May for a few 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).

As a result, the JEMB extended Candidate Nomination by three days throughout the country with the exception of Nangarhar province which was prolonged for a total of six days. News of the extension was communicated by the Chairman of the JEMB at a press conference in Kabul on 18 May to both national and international media. Where possible JEMB Commissioners also undertook field visits to the regions to both encourage Candidate Nomination and to publicize the extension of the candidate nomination period.

Despite these security-related disruptions, Candidate Nomination proceeded successfully in most regions. In provinces where international staff members were unable to return, Candidate Nomination was coordinated and executed by national staff.

▪ Legal

A number of legal issues arose during the course of the Candidate Nomination process. Many related to the interpretation of the newly amended Electoral Law. In every case, the JEMBS was able to ensure that candidates and members of the public were quickly given detailed answers to their inquiries.

One of the most commonly recurring queries from provincial offices was in reference to the requirement that some civil servants should resign at the time of nomination. Under Article 15 of the Electoral Law, civil servants holding certain positions are required to resign before submitting their candidate nomination applications. JEMBS staff reiterated that only the specifically listed positions were required to relinquish their posts. All others, including teachers and doctors, were not required to resign.

A second issue related to the prohibition on near relatives of candidates from serving as electoral officials, as specified in Article 10 of the Electoral Law. Many inquiries related to the definition of an “electoral official.” In order to ensure the impartiality of the electoral administration, the JEMBS has taken a strict approach: all employees working in the electoral administration, except for casual labourers, will be considered electoral officials.

Under the Electoral Law, a candidate must provide a deposit in support of their candidacy. This deposit is refundable if a candidate is elected or receives at least 2% of the valid votes in their respective constituency. In addition, if a candidate withdraws by the official withdrawal deadline, they are entitled to a refund of her/his deposit.

This issue came into focus when a nominated candidate died during the nomination period. Although it is unclear if the death of the candidate was related to his candidacy, the JEMB removed the candidate from the preliminary candidate list and refunded the deposit to his family.

- **Public Outreach**

Information about the Candidate Nomination process had to be disseminated early enough for it to reach the Afghan populous in urban areas as well as remote villages and rural enclaves. The Public Outreach campaign began at a time when international Public Outreach Officers were still being deployed to provinces and Afghan Public Outreach Officers were still being recruited. This inevitably led to a focus on mass media (television, radio, newsprint) being the primary method of communicating information on the candidate nomination process. This was supplemented by meetings with district shuras where and when possible. International and National Public Outreach Officers will be in place well before the registration period and other phases of the electoral calendar thereby ensuring that all areas will be reached by Public Outreach staff.

- **Communications**

While security was the most significant operational challenge, other issues arose and presented challenges to the process. Some provincial offices, such as Baghlan, reported problems sending data at the end of each day due to unreliable internet connectivity. Communications were central to the smooth implementation of the process. During the Candidate Nomination period, an updated Political Party list was disseminated to the field to update their candidate nomination software and allow accurate recording of affiliation to all registered political parties, including those newly registered.

- **Symbols**

Despite concerns about the allocation of symbols to candidates, there were relatively few complaints from candidates about the symbols. However, some Candidate Nomination Offices did report that they had received complaints about the allocation of candidate symbols. Provinces such as Nangarhar reported that candidates often requested 'a second try,' to pick another three symbols from which to choose. Candidates reasoned that a book, pen, or eagle would have more meaning and represent them far more accurately than say a shoe, duck or cherry.

- **Issues of Intimidation**

Provincial offices reported that at the level of the Candidate Nomination Office, the process was free from intimidation and outside attempts to influence practice or procedure, however, a few offices did record incidents of external influence. This was usually in the form of government officials overstepping the boundaries of their professional capacity. For instance, in one province, the Governor's office exerted constant pressure on the provincial JEMBS office to release the names of registered candidates. In another province, the Governor's office attempted to influence the recruitment and hiring process of the JEMBS provincial office. When these instructions were politely declined, the Governor announced that he could not guarantee the safety of the JEMBS staff unless his demands were met.

4. Assessment

During the Candidate Nomination period 6,102 Afghans came forward to nominate themselves for either the Wolesi Jirga or Provincial Council. Annex 1 provides a breakdown of the numbers of candidates that nominated for each province.

A total of 66 Kuchi candidates came forward for nomination. It is believed that this number could have been higher had the criteria for candidacy been more tailored to a nomadic lifestyle. Collecting 300 signatures proved to be challenging for a community in transit, as was specifically reported by Kuchis in Badakhshan.

It should be noted that these preliminary figures are based on initial reports from the field and do not take into account withdrawals or potential duplications. Figures are subject to adjustment based on resolving challenges and complaints. The final candidate numbers will be available on 12 July when the JEMB certifies the candidate list.

Table 1: Summary of the preliminary number of candidates coming forward to nominate

	Total	Male	Female
Total	6,102	5,459	626
Wolesi Jirga	2,835	2,491	344
Provincial Council	3,201	2,916	285
Kuchi	66	59	7
		89.7%	10.3%

▪ **Wolesi Jirga**

As predicted, during the initial days of Candidate Nomination the number of Afghans coming forward was relatively low, but steadily increased. The number of individuals who nominated for Wolesi Jirga seats during the first week was 283, an average of 47 people each day. During the second week, that number rose to 614, an average of 102 people each day; during the third week, the number more than doubled and reached 1,616, an average of 269 people per day.

It comes as no surprise that the province with the largest number of seats correspondingly had the greatest number of candidate nominations. In the Central Region 659 candidates come forward; 406 of these were from Kabul province.

▪ **Provincial Council**

Nominees for the Provincial Council followed a similar same trend: 87 nominees or 15 people per day during the first week; 378 nominees or 63 people per day during the second week; 1,933 or 322 people per day during the third week.

During the first two weeks, a total of 465 individuals nominated for the Provincial Council, an average of 39 individuals per day. However during the last nine days of nomination (the last week and the extension period), 2,637 individuals came forward – an average of 293 people per day.

During the last five days of the period, the number of nominations for Provincial Council surpassed those for Wolesi Jirga by an average of 134 candidates per day. During those same five days, the number of female candidates nominating for Provincial Councils rose from an average of 4 nominations per day to 44 nominations per day. Ghor province, for example, saw the number of female candidates double during the three-day extension period.

▪ **Extension Period**

During the extension period (21-23 May), 311 potential candidates came forward for Wolesi Jirga seats and 704 individuals nominated for the Provincial Council. Of the 279 female Provincial Council candidates, 130 came forward during the extension period.

As previously mentioned, the Candidate Nomination period was extended in Nangarhar province three days longer than the rest of the country due to the fact that the Candidate Nomination Office there was closed for one week. During the final three days of the extension period in Nangarhar province (24-26 May), 21 Wolesi Jirga candidates came forward, two woman among them; 68 candidates nominated for the Provincial Council, no women among them.

▪ **Withdrawals**

There were a total of 25 withdrawals of candidacy by the end of the nomination period. The number of women who withdrew was proportionally far greater than the number of men, despite the fact that the actual number of women who withdrew was seven, compared to 19 men. Provincial offices have reported that one reason for this is that the candidate had a family member who was working with JEMBS in a capacity whereby he/she was considered an “Electoral Official.” The candidate chose to withdraw because he/she did not want the family member to resign.

▪ Analysis

Reports from the field help explain why initial interest in nomination seemed unhurried. As part of the nomination process a potential candidate must appear in person at a JEMB office with a completed Candidate Nomination application. Given the geographic challenges in disseminating information about the nomination process, it took time for public outreach materials to penetrate more remote regions. While flyers and radio broadcasts facilitate the dissemination of information, word of mouth is often the primary vehicle of communication, especially for those who are illiterate or live in remote areas where radio coverage is scant.

It was also reported that the time required to collect the appropriate number of signatures and amount of money meant that a number of candidates nominated themselves later in the period.

Finally, individuals in a number of professional posts are required by Article 15 of the Electoral Law to resign prior to submitting their nomination papers. Some candidates choose to remain in their positions for as long as possible, waiting until the last minute to nominate. It is also common practice in Afghanistan for prominent candidates to nominate at the very end of a process.

Although the process did not produce an adequate number of female Provincial Council candidates in three provinces (Zabul, Uruzgan, and Nangarhar), the recruitment and nomination of an adequate if not ample number of female candidates in 31 other provinces indicates the process was ultimately a success. Indeed, the number of women nominated for Provincial Council seats was undoubtedly one of the most positive aspects of the nomination process, especially considering that the allocation of National Assembly seats to women defined in the Constitution was only extended to Provincial Councils as part of the Electoral Law passed days before the start of the Candidate Nomination. Seats that do not have sufficient female candidates to contest will remain vacant until the next Provincial Council election.

Of particular concern to the JEMB is the lack of information available for dissemination regarding Provincial Council roles and responsibilities – another possible deterrent for female candidates. With no legislative provisions in place explaining the functions of the councils, few candidates understood the office for which they were running. This may have made the Provincial Council race appear far less appealing to potential candidates. Once this issue was identified, special efforts were made through Public Outreach to target potential female candidates by clarifying these issues to the greatest extent possible.

5. Conclusions

The Candidate Nomination process was the first significant operational challenge in the 2005 electoral calendar. Despite tremendous obstacles, including opening 34 provincial offices on a tight deadline, unforeseen security incidents, and challenges posed by communications and infrastructure, the process was considered by all accounts to be a massive success.

A testament to the success of the process is evidenced in the number of candidates who have come forward, despite instability in some regions, geographic obstacles, monetary requirements and other challenges, to stand for election to the Wolesi Jirga or Provincial Councils. The number of nominated candidates guarantees a competitive race for both male and female candidates in the Wolesi Jirga. Although three provinces fell slightly short in the number of female candidates for the Provincial Council, the ample turnout in the majority of the country is nonetheless inspiring.

An extensive nationwide Public Outreach campaign was undertaken nationwide despite the fact that recruitment of civic educators was delayed. Face-to-face meetings with shuras at the district level and other local leaders and respected elders were key to the campaign.

Well trained Data Entry Clerks in all 34 provincial offices proved an effective means of ensuring the accurate recording of candidates' data, verified for consistency, including the candidate's name, photo and symbol.

The significant number of registered candidates necessitates considerable thought to future aspects of the operation such as ballot design and polling station facilities.

Annex 1: Preliminary Candidate Nomination Figures by Province. Note: Figures based on initial reports and are subject to modification.

REGION				PROVINCE		Wolesi Jirga		Provincial C		NEW CANDIDATE - WJ			NEW CANDIDATE - PC			NEW CANDIDATE - KUCHI		
						Seats total	Seats women	Seats total	Seats women	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
R1	Central Highlands	P32	Bamyan	4	1	9	3	49	8	57	61	9	70	0	0	0		
		P34	Daikondi	4	1	9	3	51	5	56	91	7	98	0	0	0		
Total R1								100	13	113	152	16	168	0	0	0		
R2	Central	P01	Kabul	33	9	29	8	358	50	408	192	37	229	9	3	12		
		P02	Kapisa	4	1	9	3	37	6	43	49	8	57	3	0	3		
		P03	Parwan	6	2	15	4	50	8	58	66	5	71	2	0	2		
		P04	Wardak	5	2	9	3	61	9	70	62	7	69	0	0	0		
		P05	Logar	4	1	9	3	50	11	61	50	3	53	5	0	5		
		P33	Panjsher	2	1	9	3	17	4	21	35	5	40	0	0	0		
Total R2								573	88	661	454	65	519	19	3	22		
R3	Southeast	P06	Ghazni	11	3	19	5	131	12	143	122	11	133	5	1	6		
		P07	Paktika	4	1	9	3	63	4	67	99	6	105	4	0	4		
		P08	Paktia	5	1	9	3	82	5	87	90	5	95	2	0	2		
		P09	Khost	5	1	9	3	83	10	93	125	7	132	2	0	2		
Total R3								359	31	390	436	29	465	13	1	14		
R4	South	P26	Neemroz	2	1	9	3	16	4	20	33	3	36	0	0	0		
		P27	Helmand	8	2	15	4	85	6	91	118	7	125	3	0	3		
		P28	Kandahar	11	3	15	4	104	11	115	123	7	130	3	1	4		
		P29	Zabul	3	1	9	3	21	3	24	34	2	36	1	0	1		
Total R4								244	26	270	340	19	359	7	1	8		
R5	West	P23	Badghis	4	1	9	3	34	5	39	42	3	45	2	0	2		
		P24	Herat	17	5	19	5	150	22	172	175	37	212	3	0	3		
		P25	Farah	5	1	9	3	45	4	49	58	6	64	2	0	2		
		P31	Ghor	6	2	15	4	53	8	61	44	6	50	0	0	0		
Total R5								282	39	321	319	52	371	7	0	7		
R6	North	P18	Samangan	4	1	9	3	35	6	41	58	6	64	0	0	0		
		P19	Balkh	11	3	19	5	103	18	121	109	15	124	2	1	3		
		P20	Jozjan	5	1	9	3	32	8	40	52	13	65	2	0	2		
		P21	Sar-I-Pul	5	1	9	3	36	7	43	43	4	47	1	0	1		
		P22	Faryab	9	3	15	4	76	11	87	66	7	73	0	0	0		
Total R6								282	50	332	328	45	373	5	1	6		
R7	Northeast	P14	Badakhshan	9	2	15	4	86	9	95	71	12	83	0	0	0		
		P15	Takhar	9	2	15	4	87	15	102	94	7	101	1	0	1		
		P16	Baghlan	8	2	15	4	100	15	115	111	6	117	1	0	1		
		P17	Kunduz	9	2	15	4	80	15	95	81	17	98	1	0	1		
Total R7								353	54	407	357	42	399	3	0	3		
R8	East	P10	Nangerhar	14	4	19	5	168	18	186	289	4	293	5	1	6		
		P11	Kunarha	4	1	9	3	60	8	68	120	3	123	0	0	0		
		P12	Laghman	4	1	9	3	57	9	66	92	8	100	1	0	1		
		P13	Nooristan	2	1	9	3	18	6	24	25	3	28	0	0	0		
Total R8								303	41	344	526	18	544	6	1	7		
TOTAL COUNTRY				239	65	420	124	2496	342	2838	2912	286	3198	60	7	67		