



# JEMB UPDATE

Edition 007/E • 04 July 2005

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Joint Electoral Management Body



## Registration Begins



Left: After a Q & A session with JEMB Commissioners Taza and Stanekzai at the Governor's office in Ghazni, enthusiastic participants pick up voter registration information. Right: An eligible voter registers at one of four registration stations in Kunduz City.

**E**lectoral preparations for the 2005 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council Elections entered their second key phase on Saturday, 25 June - the start of the Voter Registration Update Period.

At the end of the first day, 996 Voter Registration Update Stations were open and registering voters out of 1,052 total Stations in 720 locations in all 34 provinces throughout Afghanistan. By the end of the first week, the number of opened Stations rose to 1,032. Despite unavoidable issues related to security, communication and challenging weather conditions, the JEMBS is working to open the remaining 20 Stations as soon as it is possible.

During the first week, an estimated 288,836 voters have registered for the first time or corrected the information on their Voter Registration Cards. Roughly 62 percent of these cards have been issued to men; 30 percent of registrants are women and 8 percent are Kuchi.

Rates of female registration have been especially high in Ghazni, Paktika, Paktia, Nuristan, Nimroz and Daikundi. In Paktika, where total registration rates are amongst the highest, JEMBS field staff enthusiastically reported groups of women filing into registration stations after organized educational events. (Please see "Letter from Paktika" on page 2). Slightly less than 50 percent of registrants in Paktika are women. Many of the areas where female rates of registration are high are in the more conservative areas of Afghanistan. These trends are very encouraging.

Eligible voters have until 21 July to go to any Voter Registration Update Station in the province in which they intend to vote to either update or correct the information on the existing Voter Registration Card or obtain a new card if they have not previously registered for the 2004 presidential election.

*Regular updates of these figures are available on the JEMB website ([www.jemb.org](http://www.jemb.org)).*

*"During the first week, an estimated 288,836 voters have registered for the first time or corrected the information on their Voter Registration Cards. Roughly 62 percent of these cards have been issued to men; 30 percent of registrants are women and 8 are Kuchis."*

## Letter from Nimroz

### Letter from PEO Niklas Dahlquist:

Paul, our Kroll Operations Officer, walks into my office at 19.00. He is a mess. Yet he smiles.

The dust here is invasive; it gets into everything - your toothbrush, your coffee cup, even your dreams. Imagine what it does to Paul, driving through the Nimroz desert for twelve hours. Kids could build sand castles in his beard. We had heard of the sandstorms, laughed at the stories about not being able to see your hand in front of your face. We're not laughing anymore however; we now know how true these stories are.

The school that was to be the Voter Registration Update Centre in Char Burjak has managed to fall into the river (half of it actually, but the rest seems eager to follow suit soon). I cringe at asking Kabul for another alteration to the central list, yet Paul obviously has a strong case for relocating the Centre. And thus the negotiations begin.

After similar hiccups and frights, many updates to and from Kabul later, we finally arrive at the commencement of the registration period. With fully-staffed and fully-equipped Stations in every district of Nimroz, we open the gates at 08.00 as promised.

This is where it hits you, at the registration center. This is where you realize that all those lists and evaluations that Kabul always wanted yesterday actually have a practical implication. The strategic placement of the registration station based on population concentrations becomes the reality of a woman allowed to walk to register because the station is close enough. It ceases to be a grid reference and a photo. It becomes the location where a voter takes her first step in choosing the Afghanistan she wants, creating her Afghanistan.

I feel privileged to have a small hand in this process, proud of what our team has accomplished together and humbled by the massive response of the people. ■



Above: On the way to a registration centre in Nimroz province.

## Letter from Paktika

### Letter from PEO Peter Murphy:

The province of Paktika is perceived by many as reserved in several aspects, especially with regards to the rights of women who are notably absent from civil and social events. However, the first few days of the Voter Registration Update Period have contradicted these perceptions following the high numbers of women who have turned out to register in this year's Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections.

The JEMBS staff in Paktika were thrilled to see that their province reported the second highest number of female registrants nationwide on the first day of registration, second only to Kandahar, a geographically larger and more densely populated province in comparison. In fact, Paktika's women proportionally far outnumbered female registrants in populous areas such as Kabul city.

As evidence - in one of the more remote districts of Sarubi near the Pakistani border, on the second day of the registration period, a special holy day was organized by the tribal elders of this district. Women of the district were invited to a holy site known as the burial place of one of the distant descendants of the Holy Prophet Mohammad. What happened next is slightly unclear. We are not sure if the elders organized this event to encourage women to later register or if the newly appointed female District Field Coordinator (DFC), Ms. Hazina, came to the blessed site to speak to the women directly, or perhaps a combination of the two; however, the event culminated in almost 200 women making their way to the Sarubi Voter Registration Station to register to vote in the upcoming elections. Of Paktika's 23 districts, this was simply one event on one day - with an extremely productive outcome.

This gathering was the single largest turnout of registrants anywhere in the province, male or female, and the total was more than three times that of the number of men who registered in Sarubi on the same day. And this is but one example; on the previous day, nearly 150 women ignored security concerns in the sometimes volatile border district of Turwai to go to the registration station. In Charbaran district, 149 women mirrored Turwai's large turnout. Female candidates have been active throughout the province and their campaign posters have been posted in several of the districts.

All of these events will help to correct some of the erroneous beliefs about the ability of women to partake in civil activities such as the voting for their parliamentary representatives. With voter registration off to a successful start in Paktika, JEMBS staff anticipate that the people of the province, men and women, will continue to register as first time and returning voters. ■

## Commissioner Rebecca Cox



Something has been pulling Rebecca Cox toward Afghanistan for a long time. From Guatemala to the Balkans to Pakistan - the latter being the closest she has geographically come to Afghanistan until now - back to the UK, Ms.

Cox's path has finally led her to Kabul, as the fourth international Commissioner with the JEMB.

Trained as a lawyer in Great Britain and the United States and qualified at the bar there in 1990, Ms. Cox has spent 15 years in the field of Human Rights law with a focus on post-conflict societies, emerging democracies and women's issues.

Her career has been based overseas for much of those 15 years, although she has spent periods in Britain working on internationally-related issues. Her overseas experience includes numerous electoral observation missions for OSCE and the European Union in Cambodia, Kenya, Palestine, Albania, Russia and Ghana to name just a few.

Ms. Cox spent the mid-late 1990's with the United Nations Mission in Guatemala monitoring compliance with the peace accords, with regards to human rights issues in particular. She then worked with Guatemala's Truth Commission. In the wake of a 30 year civil war that claimed more than 100,000 lives, the country was struggling to piece together its present and look to its future. In order to do this, Ms. Cox and her colleagues collected the testimonies of thousands of war victims - some suffered torture or persecution, others lost family and friends to massacres and disappearances - often traveling by helicopter, four-by-four or donkey to reach remote villages set deep in the country's jungle region. Unlike South Africa, where amnesty is offered in exchange for testimony, the Guatemalan Truth Commission offered solely the opportunity to validate the victims' experiences.

"The collection of victims' testimony is important in order to acknowledge what they went through, what happened to them, which previously was denied by some in the society, and not known about by others," Ms. Cox said. "The testimonies were published and incorporated into the school curriculum which is important in order to set the historical record straight; it is a step on the road towards reconciliation."

The published testimonies closed her chapter in Guatemala and began a new one - with the Election Commission in Islamabad, Pakistan in 1999. Working under a UNDP project to support the Election Commission and Civil Society groups, Ms. Cox's primary focus was increasing women's participation in the democratic process.

"The key to increasing women's participation - as voters and candidates - is getting messages out, which includes to men and to community leaders in order to remove fears and myths that might surround women's involvement," Ms. Cox said. "In Pakistan, [as here], it is essential to use culturally appropriate methods to enable women to vote, such as female-only voting centers."

Her assignment in Pakistan created an interest in South Asia; rather than pursuing that interest in the region itself however, Ms. Cox took her interest with her to London. In 1999 and 2000 she worked with a legal aid/assistance organization which represented Afghan asylum seekers in the UK. While taking the statements of these individuals, Ms. Cox heard many personal stories of long journeys in flight from political and ethnic persecution.

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*"The key to increasing women's participation - as voters and candidates - is getting messages out, especially to men and community leaders in order to remove fears and myths that might surround voting."*

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Following four years in the British Home Office working on criminal law reform, she suddenly felt the pull.

"After four years at home, it was time to come back overseas again," said Ms. Cox.

Combining her human rights background with her experience on issues of democratization and women's rights in South Asia and a glimpse of the political history of Afghanistan through the eyes of Afghan asylum seekers, Ms. Cox accepted a position as the fourth and final JEMB international Commissioner.

"I hope to be able to support the work being done by JEMB," Ms. Cox said. "These elections are a very significant step for Afghanistan, not least with regards to women's issues. After being so excluded in recent years, [these elections are] finally a chance for women to participate and to be given a voice." ■

# Ballot lottery

Small hands reached into boxes and pulled out the names of over 6,000 candidate for placement on the ballots for the 2005 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections.

The Ballot Lottery was held on Sunday and Monday, 26-27 June at the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul. Sixty-nine lotteries (one for Wolesi Jirga candidates, one for Provincial Council Candidate and one for the Kuchi constituency) took place to determine the order of nominated candidates on the ballot for the upcoming elections.

To further ensure that the process was random, a number of Afghan children were on hand to draw the candidate names for placement. A transparent and completely random lottery process is necessary as most believe that a prime place on the ballot will translate into more votes. No other ballot placement option will produce the random draw for positions on the ballot necessary to prevent name bias in ballot order.

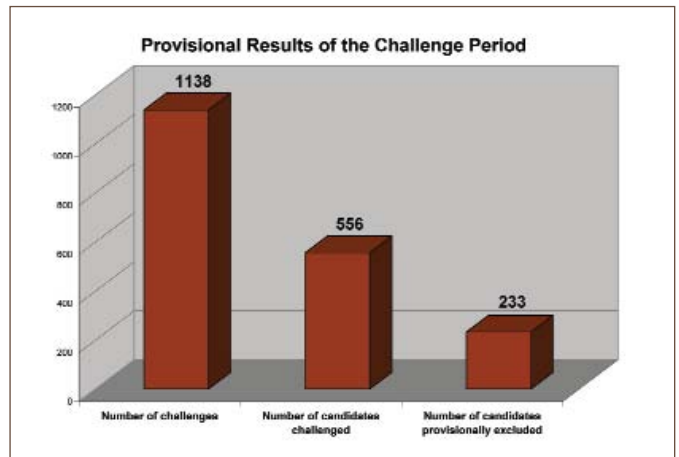
Members of the media and Afghan and international stakeholders were in attendance at the drawing as well as stakeholders, including observers and representatives of political parties. ■



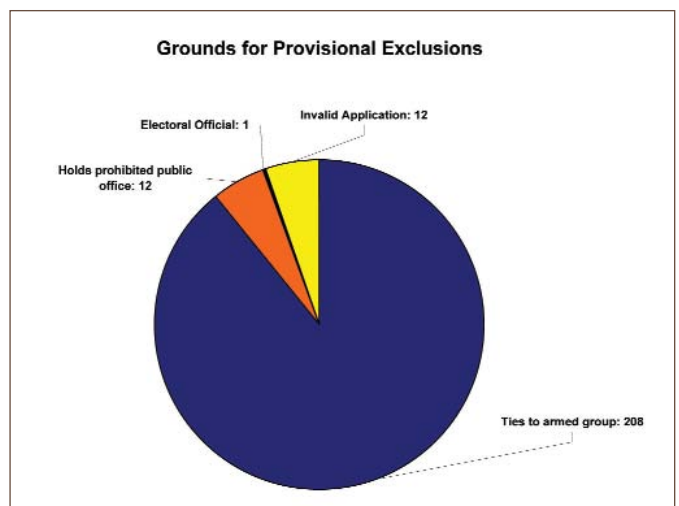
Afghan children in bright traditional dress pull candidate names from a box during the Ballot Lottery. The names were then placed on the ballots in the order in which they were drawn.

# ECC

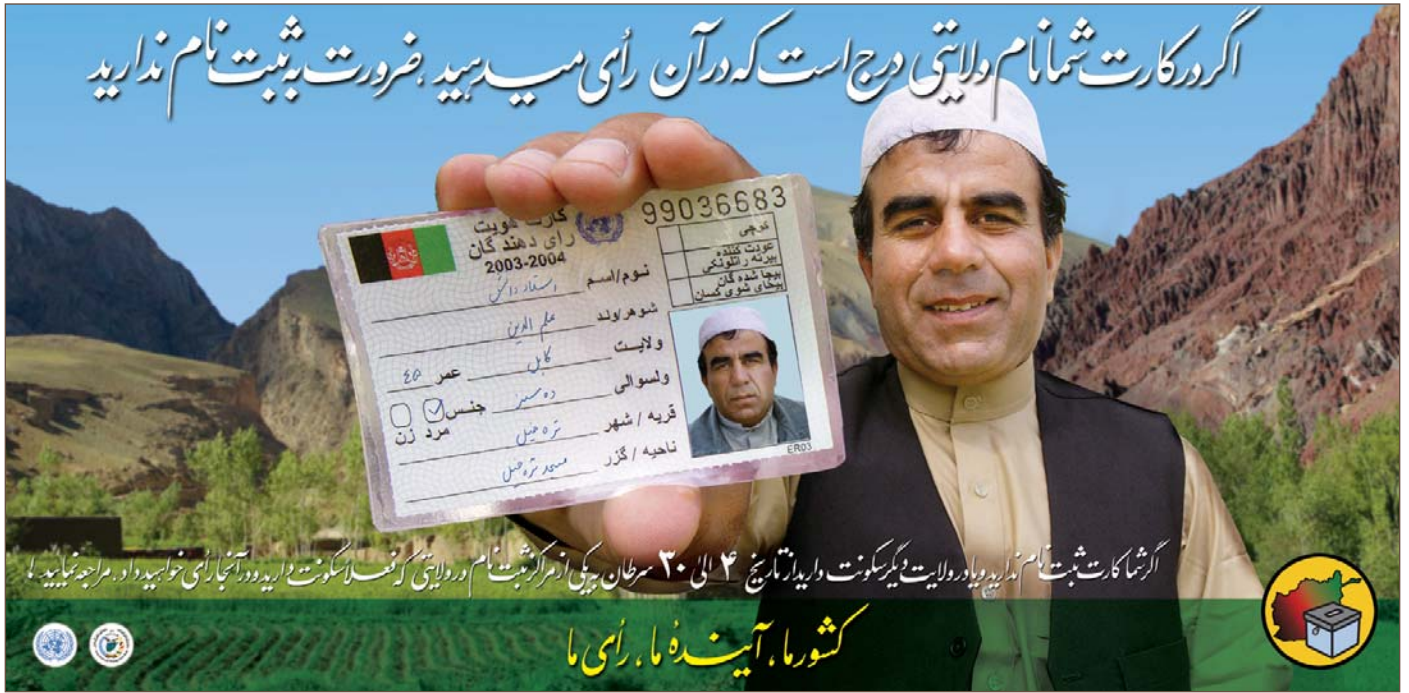
The graph below, “Provisional Results of the Challenge Period,” compares the number of individual challenge cases filed with the number of prospective candidates who were challenged and the number of candidates who were provisionally excluded. The number of prospective candidates challenged is less than half the number of challenge cases because in many cases multiple challenge cases were filed against one candidate.



The graph below, “Grounds for Provisional Exclusions,” compares the different reasons for the ECC’s provisional exclusions. The vast majority of the provisional exclusions were made based on alleged ties to armed groups. The other exclusions included prospective candidates who held prohibited public or electoral offices and prospective candidates whose applications were invalid—usually they had not gathered enough signatures to support their candidacy. There were many challenges alleging that a prospective candidate had committed serious crimes. Unfortunately, the ECC was unable to act on most of these allegations due to a lack of evidence of a criminal record or criminal conviction, as determined by Afghanistan’s Ministry of the Interior and Supreme Court. ■



# Register to Vote!



The enthusiastic voter in the JEMBS billboards informs eligible voters:

*If you vote in the province named on your card, you do not need to register.*

*If you don't have a registration card or if you now reside in another province, visit a registration centre between June 25 and July 21 in the province where you now reside and will vote.*

*Our country, our future, our vote.*

On Jalalabad Road and in Massoud Circle in Kabul, in Chawk-e-Sidiq and Chawk-e-Yulmara in Mazar-e-Sharif, near the Bazaar in Khost, and in Park Walayat in Herat - these are just a few of the 57 locations throughout Afghanistan where the larger-than-life voter may be seen. The billboards have been strategically placed in city centers and on major highways at access and exit points in 17 cities nationwide. Messages are written in both Dari and Pashto depending on the concentration of the population where they are located. Once the registration process is complete, new billboards with polling day messages will replace the current registration billboards.



Eligible voters register during the first week of the registration period at one of four registration stations in Kunduz City.

# زمونږ، زمونږ لپاره

تاسې (له مور، نه، زموږ لپاره) راډیو یو خپرونه د هرې سه شنبې په ورځ د سهار له اوه بجونه تر اته بجو پورې د "سلام وښاد" له راډیو، د چهار شنبې او پنجشنبې په ورځو د مازدیگر په څلور بجو د افغانستان له ملي راډیو او د پنجشنبې په ورځ د سهار پر اوه نیمو بجو له راډیو آرمان څخه اوریدلې شې.

**چاکلیټ دې چېرته کېږود؟**  
 وبخښه موری -  
 ټول مې وځوړل!

**تا ویلې چې لري یې**  
 ګره او ودې نه  
 ویلې چې چېرته!

**اوه رامین چاته...  
 سلام، صحت دې څنگه دی؟**

**څه خبره ده؟  
 څه مشکل لري؟**

**داسې ورته ووايه،  
 وروڼو، د افغانستان  
 د راتلونکې لپاره  
 د ښځو رایه هلموره  
 ضروري ده لکه  
 څومره چې ستاسو!**

**ته په یې نتیجه  
 دستې وکوري!**

**تول دي  
 خلاص کرل؟**

**هو، خو د تیر کال د هېواد  
 نه بهر د نوم لیکنې کار تونه  
 دا کال نه شي استعمالیدلې.**

**سلام علیکم تروري  
 د پاکستان ته په څیر راغلی!  
 څه ته بهر ته راغلی!**

**سلام علیکم خوري  
 خوشحاله يم چې خور ته راغم.  
 په اصل کې مویږ د  
 التخلیو د پاره راغلی.**

**مورې ته خو د  
 تیر کال کارت لري،  
 بل کارت وانه ځنې ځکه  
 چې د دوو کارتونو لړل  
 د قانون نه سرغړونه ده!**

**استوینو تکی باید په  
 هماغه ولایت کې نوم لیکنه  
 تر سره کړي چېرې چې  
 نوبت اوس اوسه یې.**

**مورې باید په افغانستان  
 کې د نوم لیکنې کارت  
 تر لاسه کړو.**

**مگر ما ویل چې  
 تا خو په تیر کال په  
 پاکستان کې نوم  
 لیکنه کړې وې...**

# ازما، برای ما

برنامه راډیوی ازما، برای ما را بروز های سه شنبه از ساعت هفت و سی دقیقه صبح الی هشت صبح از راډیو سلام وښاد و بروز های چهار شنبه به ساعت چهار و سی عصر از راډیو ملی افغانستان و بروز های پنجشنبه به ساعت هفت و سی دقیقه صبح از راډیو آرمان شنیده میتوانید.

**چاکلیټ را کجا ستاین؟**  
 ببخشین مگر جان-  
 کل شه خوردم!

**تو گفتی که پس ائن کو،  
 نگفتی که ده کجا؟**

**او... رامین جان...  
 سلام صحت ات چطور است؟**

**چه گپ است؟  
 چی مشکل داری؟**

**انظر برش بگو، بهادر هال!  
 برای آینده افغانستان رای  
 خاتم ها همفکر ضروری  
 است که از شما است.**

**ته باز نتیجه ائن ره  
 دستې میبیرا!**

**مغز مثل 40 سله  
 و خوردم مثل 12 سله!**

**مه برت میگم که  
 مارتنه چه قسم  
 خوشحال بسازی.**

**کل شه  
 خلاص کدی؟**

**سلام علیکم  
 از پاکستان  
 به څیر امدی!**

**سلام علیکم خواهر جان!  
 خوشحال استم که خنده ائیم.  
 ده اصل ما بهادر تشنهات ائیم.**

**مگر از کارت های  
 ثبت نام خارج کشور که  
 پارسال آئی او ام داده بود،  
 امسال استفاده نمیشه.**

**ما باید از قغانستان کارت  
 ثبت نام بدمست بیاریم.**

**خو... خي مه حالي مېرډ...  
 ای از بابت تره که ثبت نام از  
 4 سرطان تا 3 سرطان  
 از ساعت 4 الی 4 بجه صورت میگیرد.**

**بلی! دعوت کننده گان باید  
 در همان ولایت که زندگی  
 میکنند ثبت نام کنند.**

**مگر... تو خو کارت از  
 پارسال داری، دیگه کارت  
 نگیری که دوکارت داشتن  
 خلاف ورزی از قانون است.**

**مگر مه فکر کم که  
 شما پارسال از پاکستان  
 ثبت نام ده بشار...**



رایه ورکړئ اود افغانستان په بیاوډنولو کې برخه واخلي  
 رای هیږه وپارسای افغانستان کمېټه



# Meet the Press...

## PRESS RELEASE • JULY 04 2005

The Joint Electoral Management Body is deeply saddened by the killing Sunday of cleric Mohammad Nabi Mesbah, who was a member of the Provincial Election Commission in Kandahar.

While the motive for the attack on Mullah Mesbah is not clear, the JEMB condemns the attack as a senseless act of violence aimed at halting progress in Afghanistan.

"We condemn any violence against people working to rebuild Afghanistan and set it on the path to peace and stability," said Bissmillah Bissmil, the Chairman of the JEMB. "The killing of Mullah Mohammad Nabi Musbah is an act against all Afghans' hopes for peace."

Mullah Mesbah is the third Afghan working in support of the elections to have been killed in the past month.

## PRESS RELEASE • JULY 02 2005

### VOTER INFORMATION CENTRE LAUNCHED "1 8 0" TOLL FREE HOTLINE

Afghan voters with questions on the 2005 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections may now call a toll-free phone number from anywhere in Afghanistan, and have their questions answered personally. By dialling 1 8 0 from any mobile or landline phone, callers will be connected to a Voter Information Centre staffed by operators ready to answer their questions in Dari, Pashto or English from 7am to 7pm every Saturday to Thursday. The number will not be available if called after hours. The Voter Information Centre was launched this week and has already handled more than 150 public telephone enquiries.

As JEMBS staff, Voter Information Centre operators have been trained to answer any question relating to any aspect of the 2005 electoral process. The Voter Information Centre hotline has been set up by the JEMB Secretariat in cooperation with all of Afghanistan's telecommunications providers Roshan, AWCC, and Afghan Telecom as a free service for the Afghan electorate.

Ten operators will be available at any time during the opening hours to handle queries ranging from the location of Voter Registration and Polling sites, to seat numbers in each province, to the main duties of the Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Councils.

The number will be publicized through leaflets, newspaper advertisements, radio and TV broadcasts and disseminated by the JEMBS' network of civic educators. A database of queries will be compiled to provide election organizers with a picture of the level of awareness among voters on various aspects of the electoral process.

"This is a free service for the Afghan people, to ensure the widest possible participation by every eligible Afghan voter in the September 18 elections and the final stage of our land's transition to democracy," said JEMB Chairman Bissmillah Bissmil. "It will also provide us with a very valuable window into the levels of awareness among Afghan voters and help us to keep everyone accurately informed."

## PRESS RELEASE • JUNE 30 2005

### PROVISIONAL CANDIDATE LISTS

The Joint Electoral Management Body will publish Provisional Candidate Lists in each provincial office on Saturday July 2, following a three week period in which the Electoral Complaints Commission considered over 800 challenges against candidates' eligibility to run for office.

The lists will display all candidates who have nominated themselves to contest the September 18 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections, minus those who have either withdrawn or have been provisionally excluded for not meeting eligibility criteria.

Candidates whose names have been provisionally taken off the list will receive a letter outlining the reason. The reasons include failing to supply the requisite number of legitimate supporters' signatures, commanding or belonging to an armed group, or failure to resign from a senior government post.

These candidates will have until July 7 to respond. The Electoral Complaints Commission will consider all responses before the Final Candidate List is certified by the Joint Electoral Management Body on July 12.

"We are now just days away from finalizing a list of candidates who meet the criteria outlined by the Electoral Law," said JEMB Chairman Bissmillah Bissmil. "I would like to remind candidates who are not on the Provisional List that they still have a chance to prove that they can meet the eligibility criteria. If they take remedial action to meet the criteria by July 7, their names can be included on the Final Candidate List."

Remedial action may include complying with disarmament, resigning senior government posts or providing the required list of legitimate signatures of supporters.

For more information please contact:

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For more information about these and other topics, please visit our website, [www.jemb.org](http://www.jemb.org).

# News in Brief...

- The JEMB discussed potential fraud in the lists of Candidate Supporters filed by candidates and authorized the JEMBS to file a complaint with the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) against candidates whose lists comprised a significant number of invalid supporter names.
- Rebecca Cox, the fourth and final international JEMB Commissioner, was welcomed this week.
- At the close of the first week of the Voter Registration Update Period, 1,032 of the 1,052 total Registration Stations were open and operating. A total of 288,836 registrants obtained new registration cards or corrected the information on the current card.
- The Provisional Candidate List was released on Saturday, 2 July. A total of 233 candidate names do not appear on the list because a provisional determination has been made by the ECC that they have not met the requirements of candidacy. All effected candidates will have the opportunity to prove their compliance during the response period, running until 7 July, or to demonstrate remedial action to ensure that they are on the Final Candidate List.
- The Ballot Lottery was held on Sunday and Monday, 26-27 June. Candidates' names were drawn at random to determine their order on the ballot.
- A Voter Information Center has opened with six staff members to field toll-free calls (by dialing 180) from all over the country and provide answers to questions from potential voters.
- The latest UNDP financial report shows a funding gap that remains at \$ USD 73 million.

• In addition to several registration centres in the Kabul region, JEMB Commissioners Murad and Yari visited registration stations in Daikundi and Commissioners Taza and Stanekzai spoke with voters at the Governor's office in Ghazni. The Commissioners' visits are aimed at promoting awareness of the registration process.



National Assembly Elections: Financial Status as of:		2 July 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	7,786,691	£1,500,000 (FCO) £2,600,000 (DFID)
Denmark	1,996,531	
New Zealand	729,927	NZ\$1,000,000
Switzerland	1,000,000	
Australia	1,545,578	AUD\$2,000,000
Norway 1	793,650	NOK 5,000,000
Italy	5,018,820	€ 4,000,000
Canada	6,349,206	CAD 8,000,000
Finland	2,409,638	€ 2,000,000
<b>Total received to date</b>	<b>48,275,386</b>	
Committed (agreement signed)		
<b>Total committed</b>	<b>11,050,000</b>	
<b>Total pledged</b>	<b>30,290,000</b>	
Total Project Budget		
<b>Total Project Budget</b>	<b>148,665,087</b>	
Effective Carry Over from 2004	16,027,851	

Photo left column: JEMB Commissioner Stanekzai registers to vote in her home province of Ghazni after a public meeting at the Governor's office. Right column: Commissioners Taza and Stanekzai answer questions about the registration process in Ghazni.

For further information about the JEMB Update please contact: Jiffer Bourguignon at [jifferb@unops.org.af](mailto:jifferb@unops.org.af) or visit our website [www.jemb.org](http://www.jemb.org).

Photography: Marie Frechon and Jiffer Bourguignon /JEMBS