



UNAMA lauds efforts at vote transparency

By [Pajhwok Report](#) Apr 23, 2014 - 13:56

KABUL (Pajhwok): The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on Wednesday it was encouraged by steps taken by the two Afghan national electoral institutions to continuously increase transparency around the counting of votes. "The Afghan electoral institutions should be commended for their efforts to make the electoral process more transparent than ever before," said Ján Kubiš, Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of UNAMA. "Openness and a willingness to have observers, candidate agents and other parties to scrutinise the process at every step are of critical importance," he said, calling constant communication with candidates and the public another essential requirement. Kubiš expressed these views while speaking after a meeting of the Chairs of the Independent Election Commission ([IEC](#)) and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) with the diplomatic community in Kabul.

The heads of diplomatic missions expressed their commitment to respecting Afghan ownership of the electoral process, appreciation of the electoral institutions work to date and pledged their continuous support. "I am encouraged by the electoral institutions' resolve to closely coordinate their work to ensure that all complaints are addressed and adjudicated according to Afghan laws." The UN diplomat said the vote must be duly audited and the integrity of the electoral process must be safeguarded.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/23/unama-lauds-efforts-vote-transparency>

Vote recounting process in Balkh completed

By [Zabihullah Ihsas](#) Apr 23, 2014 - 14:23

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Pajhwok): The Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) on Wednesday said recount process of the April 5 election votes in northern Balkh province completed while the votes of three ballot boxes invalidated.

Provincial IECC chief Mohammad Anabi told Pajhwok Afghan News the recounting process of votes in 27 polling centres was started last week which had been completed. He said 16 of the polling centres were quarantined in the wake of complaints while 11 others were ordered by the IECC main office to be quarantined for review.

Most of the quarantined ballot boxes were from Mazar-I-Sharif, the provincial capital and Zaree, Chamtal and Charbolak districts of the province. The ballot boxes have recounted due to technical problems but there was less chance of invalidating them.

"Some of the boxes did not had result sheets while some of them had their seals broken. Some other ballot boxes had lack of stamps," he said, adding the reviewed report of the ballot boxes have sent to the main office for final decision. Ballot boxes of those centers have cancelled where the voting process was continued when the official time was expired, he concluded.

Paktika officials ready for second election round

By [Ali Muhammad Nazari](#) Apr 23, 2014 - 16:12

SHARAN (Pajhwok): Local officials in southeastern Paktika province said on Wednesday they were fully ready if the election headed for the second round.

In an exclusive interview with Pajhwok Afghan News, Paktika police chief, Maj. Gen. Nabi Jan Mulakhel, said the April, 5 presidential and provincial council polls were held in a peaceful environment in Paktika, with all polling centres opened.

Afghan forces played leading role to ensure security on Election Day, but the role of Afghan Local Police (ALP) was of great importance and commendable, he added.

Mulakhel said security was excellent which was followed by massive turnout in Sharan City, including all districts because of the deployment of local police force.

"Local police are deployed to almost all districts excluding Gomal, Gayan, Zherok and Yousuf Khel areas," he added. They have put in place strict security measures for the elections if the ballot headed for runoff, he informed.

Muhammad Akram, a resident of Sharan City, said all eligible voters thronged to the polling centres to exercise

their vote right during the April, 5 election. He added due to insecurity in the past polls, people did not participate in the elections. Bahawal Katawazai, a resident of Yahyakhel district, said residents of his town took active part in the polls.



Balance in poll results from provinces stressed

By [Mohammad Halim Karimi](#) Apr 23, 2014 - 19:03

KABUL (Pajhwok): As a planned full results from the April elections were delayed until Saturday, civil society activists and members of tribal councils on Wednesday asked the two electoral bodies to maintain a balance among provinces with regard to releasing partial returns.

They told a press conference in Kabul that the Independent Election Commission ([IEC](#)) and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) should announce unambiguous results by discarding bogus votes.

Presidential candidate Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai and the [Wolesi Jirga](#) had also called on the electoral bodies to separate fraudulent votes from fake ones before releasing further results.

Representatives of civil society groups and tribal councils asked the electoral institutions to consider a balance in results from provinces.

They issued a statement, which accused the IEC of not taking into account a balance and fairness in results from provinces.

It said the IEC had failed in some instances to provide a proper explanation that how did it declared votes as valid and incorporated clean ones in partial results.

The statement called on the IEC to explain to the masses how it separated fraudulent votes from valid ones and do more to ensure the vote count process had been transparent and the results far from being dubious.

It also called for timely action to decide and make clear the fate of quarantined ballot boxes, asking the IECC to

expose individuals having committed fraud and declare invalid fraudulent votes without any hesitation.

In a reference to the 100,000 votes thrown out in western Herat province, the statement said electoral complaints commission officials should continue their job and name those creating hurdles in their way.

“We call on the electoral bodies to stay impartial in their job because the fate of Afghans’ vote is in their hand. The Afghans will support every honest decision by the electoral bodies.”

They also asked the government to avoid any kind of meddling in the electoral process in a mark of respect to the law.

They said the government should help the electoral bodies monitor, detect and punish elements involved in irregularities and prevent such people from putting pressure on the commissions.

They warned if the elections were spoiled or discredited, the government and the electoral bodies would be responsible for that.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/23/balance-poll-results-provinces-stressed>



14 media outlets fined for law violation

By [Muhammad Hasan Khitab](#) Apr 23, 2014 - 19:08

KABUL (Pajhwok): The media commission of the Independent Election Commission ([IEC](#)) on Wednesday fined 13 television channels and a radio network for violation of laws during election campaign, an official said.

The electronic media outlets were fined for coverage of campaigns of five presidential contenders after they unleashed election activities’ coverage three days ahead of the polls--- the duration coming in the violation period, said, Hashmatullah Radfar, deputy head of the media commission.

Rahi Farda, Arzo, Afghan and Dawat channels were fined 50,000 afghanis each while Aina 75,000, Saba 60,000, Nigah and Jwandoon 35,000, Mehar 20,000, Nurin, Shamshad and Radio Nawa fined 10,000 afghanis respectively.

Radfar said fines levied on the channels for covering election activities of presidential runners, including Abdul Rab Rassoul Sayyaf, Dr. Zalmai Rasoul, Dr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah and Gul Agha Sherzai during campaign.

Farida Nikzad, head of the media commission, however, lauded the role of other media outlets for staying neutral during the election campaign.

She praised Pajhwok Afghan News for its neutrality and provided masses with continuous updates of the ballot by presenting special reports.

Pajhwok Afghan News deserved to be appreciated for launching "Afghans Vote" which helped readers provided a range of news on the entire election process, she added.

In addition, she praised Tolo, Tolo News, One TV, Khurshid and Kabul News channels for demonstrating impartiality to cover the ballot process.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/23/14-media-outlets-fined-law-violation>



MPs want final results in stipulated time

By [Abasin Zaheer](#) Apr 23, 2014 - 19:33

KABUL (Pajhwok): The [Wolesi Jirga](#) on Wednesday asked the Independent Election Commission ([IEC](#)) to announce the final results from the April 5 elections in the stipulated time.

The call comes as the IEC delayed a planned release of preliminary results until Saturday to allow for recounts and audits. The results were expected on Thursday, but IEC secretary Ziaulhaq Amarkhil said in a statement they would be postponed until at least Saturday to ensure they are not tainted by fraud. "The commission is responsible to the Afghan electorate," said Amarkhil. The full results, now expected on Saturday, will still be preliminary and must be further investigated by a separate Election Complaints Commission before final results are to be announced May 14. Lower House speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahimy told today's session the election results had a great importance for Afghanistan to see a peaceful transfer of power from one elected government to another.

He said the results should be announced as per schedule because a delay in releasing the outcome could erode people's trust on the election process and the election commission.

"For the sake of transparency in the election process, the Wolesi Jirga is sending a letter to the election commission to call for the results to be declared as schedule," Ibrahimy said.

Lawmaker Bashir Ahmad Tayanj said the people were impatiently waiting for the results and the election commission should announce them on time.

"The commission has delayed the preliminary results for undeclared reasons, a decision that shows the electoral body is under pressure from an outside force," he suspected.

His colleague from Takhar province Qutratullah Zaki said the results should be fair and acceptable because the Afghans had risked their lives by partaking in the elections.

He cautioned if the election commission tried to pave the way for a presidential candidate to emerge winner through fraud, it would be held responsible for any bad consequences.

Similar views were expressed by other lawmakers.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/23/mps-want-final-results-stipulated-time>

Sayyaf to conditionally back future govt

By [Azizullah Hamdard](#) Apr 23, 2014 - 20:16

KABUL (Pajhwok): Trailing presidential candidate Abul Rab Rassoul Sayyaf on Wednesday said they wanted a future government that was in the interest of Islam and Afghanistan and could bring about peace and stability.

Addressing a graduation ceremony for the Dawat University students in Kabul, the [former jihadi](#) commander criticised leading presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah for not participating in the graduation ceremony.

Sayyaf has secured seven percent of votes in nearly 50 percent of ballots tallied so far and is in the fourth position behind Zalmai Rassoul.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/23/sayyaf-conditionally-back-future-govt>

Votes cast at 9 Wardak sites quarantined

By [Pajhwok Report](#) Apr 24, 2014 - 15:56

MAIDAN SHAHR (Pajhwok): Ballots cast at nine polling centres have been quarantined in central Maidan Wardak province, where votes of 34 boxes were recounted, an official said on Thursday.

Independent Election Commission chief in Wardak Noorullah Paigham told Pajhwok the ballots had been quarantined as requested by the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission ([IECC](#)).

He said the [IEC](#) had not directly ordered the audit into votes cast as the nine centres, saying the ballots would either be thrown out or declared valid after their investigation was completed. He said the IEC had so far declared no one as invalid in Wardak.

IECC deputy chief in Wardak Hayatullah Hamid said the ballots being investigated belonged to seven polling centres in Behsud district and two in Syedabad district.

He said they had so far audited 162 ballot boxes and recounted votes of 36 others.

He said they had registered 39 complaints and divided them into four categories and six of the complaints had been dispatched to Kabul and the rest remained with them for investigation.

Some provincial council members allege widespread fraud had been committed during the April 5 elections in Wardak.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/24/votes-cast-9-wardak-sites-quarantined>

Dr. Zalmai Rassoul with 11.1 percent (652,116) votes is in the third position. Abdul Rab Rassoul Sayyaf has secured 7 percent (409,879) of votes, Qutbuddin Hilal 2.8 percent (165,567), Gul Agha Sherzai 1.6 percent (96,407), Daud Sultanzoyi 0.5 percent (27,312) and Hidayat Amin Arsala 0.2 percent (13,724).

Earlier results showed Abdullah had collected 44.4 percent (1,536,133) and Ahmadzai 33.2 percent (1,146,251), with Rassoul trailing at 10.4 percent (357,930).

Provinces where less than 80 percent of the votes had been counted so far include Ghazni 54.98 percent, Daikundi 77.65 percent, Paktika 63.55 percent, Kapisa 79.34 percent, Baghlan 78.54 percent, Uruzgan 78.02 percent, Nimroz 73.24, Ghor 72.31percent, Paktika 63.55 percent, Logar 72.35 percent, Zabul 74.55percent and Maidan Wardak 76.43percent.

Nuristani said the preliminary results would be announced on Saturday. IEC officials on Thursday said they delayed the preliminary results to allow for audits and recounts, amid calls from Ghani and the [Wolesi Jirga](#) to stop releasing further results until bogus votes are separated from valid ones.

On Saturday, IEC spokesman Noor Mohammad Noor told reporters he would not rule out the possibility of a runoff between two top-rated presidential candidates.

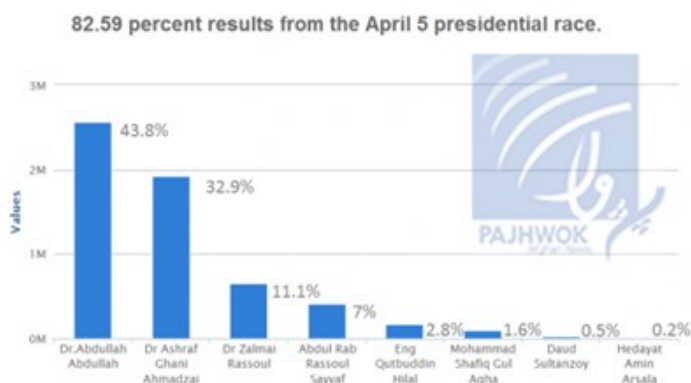
He said the vote tallying process was on track and only 30 percent work needed to announce the preliminary results. Noor said if the election went into a second round stage, the election commission might not be able to hold it in the stipulated time of two weeks after the final results due until May 14.

Under the Afghan Constitution, a presidential candidate must bag 50 plus one percent votes to emerge the winner, and a run-off between two top-rated runners shall take place within two weeks after the final results had been released.

Independent Electoral Complaints Commission spokesman Nader Muhseni told Pajhwok Afghan News they had so far assessed 400 complaints regarding fraud and other irregularities in 17 provinces.

The winner will replace President Karzai, who is in office since the 2001 US-led invasion ousted the Taliban, and whose relations with Washington have sharply deteriorated for his refusal to sign the security agreement. See voting chart here:

<http://www.elections.pajhwok.com/en/content/votecount>



82pc results: Victory doubtful in 1st round

By [Pajhwok Report](#) Apr 24, 2014 - 16:52

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Independent Election commission ([IEC](#)) on Thursday announced a third batch of partial results from the April 5 presidential vote, showing Abdullah maintains his lead over closest rival Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, but unable to secure an outright majority.

The results were based on 82.59 percent (5,857,442) votes tallied so far, with Abdullah collecting 43.8 percent (2,564,284) and Ahmadzai 32.9 percent (1,928,153), IEC chief Ahmad Yusuf Nuristani told a press conference in Kabul.

He said 17.5 percent of the votes remained to be counted, adding it was doubtful that anyone would win in the first round.



Nangarhar forces ready to secure runoff vote

By [Mahbob Shah Mahbob](#) Apr 24, 2014 - 16:59

JALALABAD (Pajhwok): As tribal elders praised them for protecting voters and polling sites during the elections, security officials on Thursday said they were ready to maintain security for a second round run-off election in eastern Nangarhar province.

Hundreds of tribal elders, who gathered in Jalalabad, praised security forces for their job during the presidential and provincial council elections held on April 5.

Tribal elder Malak Darya Khan told Pajhwok that today's gathering was attended by elders from all districts to pay tribute to security forces and government officials for their services during the elections.

He said the elections had been peaceful in much of Nangarhar and residents were ready to work alongside security forces and the government for the country's rebuilding.

"We considered it a national responsibility to praise security forces for protecting voters and polling centres and we urge high officials that they should also commend Nangarhar forces."

Maulvi Jan Mohammad Tarakhel, a religious scholar, said security forces had bravely performed their duty during the elections. "Security forces did their job well and the Afghans also fulfilled their responsibility by casting votes despite threats. Our demand is that now the ballot should be held in extreme respect."

The cleric said if the elections headed for a second round, Afghans would fully partake in the runoff.

Governor Maulvi Attaullah Ludin also praised security and government officials for their efforts to secure the elections and thanked tribal elders for honouring them. "The elaborate arrangements by security forces, close cooperation by the media and support from elders during the polls tell us that Afghanistan is now rebuilding." <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/24/nangarhar-forces-ready-secure-runoff-vote>

Figures on suspect ballots in Paktika incorrect

By [Ali Mohammad Nazari](#) Apr 25, 2014 - 11:33

SHARANA (Pajhwok): The Independent Electoral Complaint Commission (IECC) on Friday said the media had been released incorrect figures about the quarantined ballot boxes and invalidated votes in southeastern Paktia province.

Two days back, IECC commissioner Abdul Hamid Malang in Paktika had committed a mistake in figures released to the media, IECC commissioner Muhammad Khan Abid told Pajhwok Afghan News.

"Malang told the media that ballot boxes of 183 polling centres are quarantined and votes cast at 12 polling centers invalidated," Abid recalled.

Correcting the figures, Abid said they had quarantined ballot boxes of 114 polling stations and invalidated votes of nine centres.

Much of the votes canceled belonged polling centres in Waza Khwa, Urgun, Khushamand and Wor Mamay districts, he added.

He said they would recount the suspect ballots on Friday (today) in the presence of observers before releasing results.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/25/figures-suspect-ballots-paktika-incorrect>



Khostis want Afghan electorate respected

By [Pajhwok Report](#) Apr 25, 2014 - 15:44

Thousands of tribal elders and youth demanded respect to votes cast by the Afghans in the April 5 elections, asking the electoral bodies to be fair while assessing complaints and releasing results. Rasoul Muhammad Tanai, head of Tanai tribe, told the gathering the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the Independent Electoral Complaint Commission (IECC) should be careful while dealing with complaints and fair while separating valid and invalid votes. Both the electoral bodies should address complaints in the presence of observers and all the stakeholders, he said and added If the polls went to a second round, women should actively take part in the runoff.

Amir Bahir Baya, an elder and university teacher, praised government officials for remaining neutral during the election process.

He asked people to come out of their homes and cast their vote if the ballot headed for a runoff.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/25/khostis-want-afghan-electorate-respected>



Colourful ceremony to mark power shift: Karzai

By [Pajhwok Report](#) Apr 25, 2014 - 18:40

KABUL (Pajhwok): President Hamid Karzai on Friday said he would hand over power to anyone winning the April 5 election in a colourful ceremony, saying Afghanistan was taking solid steps towards a bright future.

“Everyone who emerges victor in the elections will be the president of all Afghans. I will surrender him charge in a colourful ceremony because his success (in election) is the success of Afghans,” Karzai told tribal elders visiting him at the Presidential Palace.

A statement issued from the palace said Afghanistan [Ulema](#) Council members praised the Afghans for widely participating in the presidential and provincial council elections.

In a reference to the historic vote, Karzai, who is in office since the US-led invasion ousted the Taliban regime in 2001, said the elections proved as wrong the concerns expressed in western media about the year 2014.

The council praised the outgoing president’s legacy he will be leaving behind in forms of roads, hospitals, telecommunications, higher education facilities, freedom of speech and media’s promotion.

The ulema said Karzai helped united the nation and encouraged communities to overcome past divisions. Karzai helped strengthened national forces and called into session five times the [Loya Jirga](#) and created the [High Peace Council](#) to find a negotiated solution to the insurgency.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/25/colourful-ceremony-mark-power-shift-karzai>



Tight security urged for looming runoff

By [Mahbob Shah Mahbob](#) Apr 26, 2014 - 12:13

JALALABAD (Pajhwok): Civil society and youth representatives in eastern Nangarhar province on Saturday urged the authorities to put in place tight security measures for a likely runoff between two top-rated presidential candidates.

The call was echoed at a gathering attended by dozens of youth and local security officials in Jalalabad, the provincial capital.

Speaking on behalf of the youth, Syed Agha Arab said they had decided to encourage more people into participating in the election by launching an awareness campaign.

“Afghanistan’s future is very important to us. That is why we are gathered here to underline the turnout should be higher than the first round election,” he stressed.

A civil society activist, Haji Omar, called on the electoral bodies to demonstrate neutrality in evaluation of complaints and counting of votes.

He added nobody reserved the right to play with the country’s future and a runoff if needed should be held transparently.

“We are ready to help our security forces maintain security in the second round,” he assured.

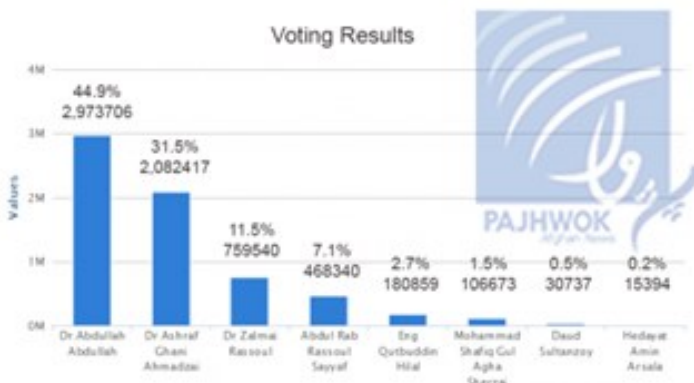
Deputy Governor Muhammad Hanif Gardiwal assured that security forces were fully prepared to secure the runoff vote the way they did on April 5.

Gen. Dadan Lawang, the commander of 201st Selab Military Corps fourth brigade, said the troops had the ability to provide tight security for the second round polls.

He told Pajhwok Afghan News: “We are serving the soil and keeping its security is our national obligation.”

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/26/tight-security-urged-looming-runoff>

100 % preliminary results announced, 6,892,816 votes counted and 234,674 votes were invalidated. Another 40,476 votes found invalidated that were cast in favour of candidates who pulled out of presidential election earlier.



'Elections runoff' between Abdullah and Ahmadzai

By [Pajhwok Report](#) Apr 26, 2014 - 18:31

KABUL (Pajhwok): The preliminary results from the April 5 presidential elections show Abdullah Abdullah has garnered the most votes 44.9 percent, followed by Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai with 31.5 percent, but none could secure the magic 50 plus one percent to avoid a runoff.

Zalmay Rassoul came in the third place with 11.5 percent, Independent Election Commission head Yousaf Nuristani told reporters in Kabul.

He said Abdullah, a former foreign minister in President Karzai's previous term, won the most votes but not the majority needed to avoid a runoff.

He said Abdullah had 44.9 percent of the vote and ex-Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai came in second with 31.5 percent.

From the total 6,617,666 cast votes, Abdullah secured 2,973,706, Ahmadzai 2,082,417, Rassoul 759,540, Abdul Rab Rasoul Sayyaf 468,340, Eng. Qutbuddin Hilal 180,859, Mohammad Shafiq Gul Agha Sherzai 106,673, Mohammad Daud Sultanzoï 30,737 and Hidayat Amin Arsala received 15,394 votes. Electoral law requires a runoff between the top two candidates if no one candidate gets a majority. A runoff should be held within 15 days of final results.

Nuristani said it was a preliminary outcome, which would go to the Independent Election Complaints Commission (IECC) to work on it.

As soon as the IECC shared its findings with them, they would announce that, he added.

He said they were prepared if the election went to a second round, which he said was doable. About seven million people cast their votes in the April 5 presidential elections despite threats from the Taliban.

The preliminary results show a total of 6.8 million votes had been cast in the April 5 elections.

Under the Afghan Constitution, a run-off between two top-rated runners shall take place within two weeks of the

final results due on May 14.

Nuristan said that 234,674 votes from 31 provinces polled at 525 polling sites had been thrown out.

The IEC tallied a total of 6,892,816 votes from across the country, showing none of the candidates had secured 3,446,408 votes needed to be declared the winner. He said the IEC had assessed 1,964 electoral sites and recounted votes at 810 sites.

The IEC says about 64 percent male and 36 percent female voters had cast votes in the presidential and provincial council elections.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/26/elections-runoff-between-abdullah-and-ahmadzai>

Electoral bodies be praised for vote integrity: Kubiš

By [Pajhwok Report](#) Apr 26, 2014 - 23:10

KABUL (Pajhwok): The UN top envoy in Afghanistan on Saturday welcomed the release of preliminary results from the April 5 vote and said the Afghan electoral bodies should be commended for their work to make the process more transparent than ever before.

"They should also be commended for their efforts to protect the integrity of the election process and the votes of the people, while doing their utmost to work in accordance with the electoral timetable," said Ján Kubiš, said the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan.

Also the UNAMA head, Kubiš said the Independent Election Commission (IEC) should be acknowledged for their serious effort to separate clean from fraudulent votes before releasing the preliminary results, which he called as an important step towards next month's final results.

The Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) is tasked with adjudicating electoral complaints and the IEC will final results due on 14 May only after the adjudication is completed.

"It is now of fundamental importance that the IECC continues to carry out its obligations to address complaints, notably related to the preliminary results in a professional, expeditious and open manner," Kubiš said.

He said the IEC and IECC needed to coordinate closely their work to ensure that credible complaints were properly handled and that the integrity of the electoral process safeguarded.

Looking forward to the release of the final results, Kubiš called for all presidential candidates and their supporters to display respect for the process and the national electoral institutions authorized to lead the process.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/26/electoral-bodies-be-praised-vote-integrity-kubiš%C5%A1>



Ghani vows to fight on, refuses deals

By [Khwaja Basir Ahmad](#) Apr 27, 2014 - 15:09

KABUL (Pajhwok): Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, who is second behind Abdullah Abdullah in preliminary results from the April 5 presidential elections, on Sunday said he would fight on and go for a second round with determination, refusing to strike deals.

The former finance minister, who secured 31.5 percent of the vote, told reporters in Kabul people should decide who had the ability to bring changes to the system.

Abdullah, a former foreign minister in President Karzai's previous term, bagged 44.5 percent of the votes, but failed to reach the magic 50 plus one percent needed to avoid a runoff with Ghani.

Ghani said that investigations into fraud could change the percentages and lessen the distance between the two top candidates before final results due on May 14.

"A second round is a must according to constitution. Any doubts will threaten the stability of Afghanistan. "We will go for principles, not deals," he added. "The people's votes tell me not to strike any deals with anyone behind the curtains.

"We are ready, the people are ready, I call on the international community not to doubt our determination. "If the polls are transparent, I will be the first to congratulate the winner, and we expect the same from them, because we will be the winner."

The United Nations' mission in Afghanistan welcomed Sunday's results, but warned election officials that they must address all complaints "in a professional, expeditious and open manner" to safeguard the process.

Nearly seven million people voted in the April 5 election out of an estimated electorate of 13.5 million -- well above the 2009 turnout.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/27/ghani-vows-fight-refuses-deals>



US confident Afghan forces to secure runoff vote

By [Pajhwok Report](#) Apr 27, 2014 - 16:09

MAIDAN SHAHR (Pajhwok): A senior US diplomat on Sunday said she was confident the Afghan forces had the ability to keep security for a possible runoff between two top-voted candidates in the April 5 presidential race.

Karin Decker, High Representative of the US State Department to southeastern Afghanistan, told a gathering in this capital city of central Maidan Wardak province, that the Afghan security forces had been able to maintain security for the first round elections without support from their foreign counterparts.

She said international troops had been fully poised to assist their Afghan counterparts during the elections, but they were not called in and the Afghan forces did the job on their own.

"I am confident if the elections go to a second round, the Afghan forces will keep security for that," she told the gathering also attended by Governor Abdul Majeed Khogyani and other local officials.

Khogyani said a second round of the elections would be more secure because the Afghan forces would try to overcome gaps they experienced in the first round.

Meanwhile, Independent Election Commission head in Wardak Eng. Noorullah Paigham said they were fully prepared to conduct a runoff election if needed. He said mistakes committed in the first round would not be repeated.

He said Wardak residents were hopeful the second round would see all polling centres open in the province.

Preliminary results announced a day earlier show Abdullah Abdullah has garnered the most votes 44.5 percent, setting the stage for a runoff with his closest rival Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai on 31.5 percent of the votes.

Besides the [IEC](#), defence and interior ministries have also said they are ready to hold a runoff between the two leading candidates if necessary.



Increased turnout in runoff predicted in Helmand

By [Shams Jalal](#) Apr 27, 2014 - 17:21

Fraud is my only rival: Abdullah

By [Mohammad Halim Karimi](#) Apr 27, 2014 - 16:47

KABUL (Pajhwok): Top-voted presidential candidate Dr. Abdullah Abdullah on Sunday said his victory in the first round of presidential elections was clear if the vote had been clean, saying fraud was his main rival.

Addressing a press conference in Kabul, Abdullah, who secured 44.9 percent of the votes, said he was not concerned about the elections heading for a second round, but measures should be taken to prevent fraud in the runoff.

His main rival Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai secured 31.5 percent of the votes, but both fell short of the magic 50 plus one percent to avoid a runoff.

Abdullah criticised the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) for giving a short deadline to register complaints regarding the preliminary results and invalidated votes.

However, the IECC extended by 24 hours the deadline from 7pm Sunday to 7pm Monday.

Abdullah claimed with the evidence they had, the victory of his team was evident and clear, saying he would have won the first round decisively if the election had been clean. "We said from the beginning that fraud is our only rival, and we still hope that the complaints we have delivered will be addressed in a transparent way. "There were fraud violations -- organised, systematic fraud."

Abdullah also accused the government of "meddling" in the vote.

The final result is set to be announced on May 14 after a period for adjudication of hundreds of fraud complaints -- followed by a run-off tentatively scheduled for June 7.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/27/fraud-my-only-rival-abdullah>

LASHKARGAH (Pajhwok): Officials in southern Helmand province on Sunday hoped more people would turn out to cast their votes in a second round election than the first round, when elaborate security arrangements had been put in place for their protection.

Deputy governor Ahmad Massoud Bakhtwar told a meeting of security officials in Lashkargah that efforts would be made not to repeat mistakes occurred on April 5. He did not specifically mention the shortcomings, but a shortage of ballot papers, fraud and security incidents in some areas had occurred in Helmand on the Election Day. Police chief Brig. Gen. Abdul Qayum Baqizoy said the capacity and experience of police increased with each passing day.

He said the people would throng polling stations with increased enthusiasm in the runoff because previously they feared possible attacks, which did not happen.

The police chief said the people knew Afghan security forces had the ability to provide them security, an understanding that would lead to an increased turnout.

Independent Election Commission head for Helmand Qudratullah Naqshbandi said they were ready for a runoff election and had all required resources in this regard.

Of 219 polling centres in Helmand, 147 were open on the election day, when nearly 6000 observers oversaw the voting process.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/27/increased-turnout-runoff-predicted-helmand>

ANA poised to secure runoff vote: Gen. Karimi

By [Mohammad Asif Ahmadzai](#) Apr 27, 2014 - 20:55

KABUL (Pajhwok): Chief of Army Staff Gen. Sher Mohammad Karimi on Sunday said the Afghan National Army (ANA) was fully prepared to maintain security for a runoff election across the country.

Various issues of national interest were discussed as President Hamid Karzai's security team, the National Security Council (NSC),

met under Karzai's chairmanship at the Presidential Palace, a statement from the palace said.

At the meeting, Defense Minister Gen. Bismillah Khan Mohammadi thanked President Karzai for his continued support to Afghan security forces, particularly the ANA.

The defense minister said his ministry was adopting measures to strengthen and equip the ANA soldiers.

He expressed his satisfaction over the completion of all four phases of the security transition from foreign troops to Afghan security forces. He said his ministry was awaiting the final security switch to increase focus on border areas.

Chief of Army Staff Gen. Sher Mohammad Karimi, speaking on the occasion, said the ANA was all poised to adopt strict security measures if a runoff election was to be held.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/27/ana-poised-secure-runoff-vote-gen-karimi>



IEC asked to publish results online per station

By [Pajhwok Report](#) Apr 27, 2014 - 23:53

KABUL (Pajhwok): The EU Election Assessment Team (EU EAT), welcoming the preliminary results, on Sunday said it invited the Independent Election Commission (IEC) to increase transparency and publish online all preliminary results per polling station.

"This will enable all stakeholders including voters and candidates to fully evaluate the presidential election at that stage," Thijs Berman, the EU EAT chief observer, said in a statement.

He said the EU team would remain in Afghanistan until the electoral process including a second round ended and would continue assessing the compliance of the elections with the Afghan legislation and with international standards.

The 16-member EU Election Assessment Team, led by Thijs, consists of international experts from 13 European countries and has been in Kabul since March 15.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/27/iec-asked-publish-results-online-station>



71 complaints lodged against preliminary results

By [Pajhwok Report](#) Apr 28, 2014 - 17:37

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) on Monday confirmed receiving 71 complaints against preliminary results of the April 5 presidential elections.

IECC spokesman Nader Muhseni told reporters in Kabul most of the complaints were about the fate of invalidated votes in provinces, interferences by powerful individuals and the use of government resources.

He said the complaints regarding the preliminary results included 70 objections, which had been submitted by one of the leading candidates.

Most of the complaints had come from Herat, Kabul, Ghazni, Paktia and Balkh provinces, he said, adding they would start assessing the complaints by Monday.

The two leading candidates, Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai have expressed their optimism to win the election in the first round, but the IECC said it was a premature assumption.

Muhseni said the complaints would be investigated in the presence of candidates in an open manner.

According to the schedule of the Independent Election Commission, complaints must be probed within 20 days of preliminary results before the announcement of final results expected on May 14.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/28/71-complaints-lodged-against-preliminary-results>

US will wait for BSA till election process is over

By [Lalit K Jha](#) Apr 29, 2014 - 10:59

WASHINGTON (Pajhwok): The United States will wait for the Afghan election process to be over for the new leadership to decide on the bilateral security agreement (BSA), a State Department official said Monday. "We obviously have said from the beginning that we would allow the Afghan elections officials to see the process through, and we completely respect the process,

that it continues to be underway there,” the State Department Spokesperson, Jen Psaki, told reporters at her daily news conference.

As for the BSA, she said the United States will leave it up to the individual who will be elected. “But all of the candidates have said that they would sign the BSA,” she said in response to a question.

“We made a decision several weeks ago that we would be certainly open to that, so we’ll let the process see its way through, and certainly continuing to have a presence where we advise and assist and train the Afghans and continue to work with them could be in the interests of the United States as well as the Afghan people,” Psaki said.



Qanuni asks IEC to respect people’s verdict

By [Pajhwok Report](#) Apr 29, 2014 - 17:27

KABUL (Pajhwok): The first vice-president on Tuesday asked the Independent Election Commission ([IEC](#)) to respect people’s verdict and prevent the use of unfair means.

Speaking at an event marking the Mujahideen’s Victory, Younus Qanuni said the April 5 election had put Afghanistan on the road to a bright future. The IEC was duty-bound to respect people’s mandate, he stressed.

Qanuni added masses had discharged their duty by turning out in large numbers on Election Day. It was the commission’s turn to review the process in a fair way.

“By exercising their franchise in an unprecedented way, the Afghans have proved they are a democracy-loving nation. Now it is the turn of the IEC and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) to thwart conspiracies,” he remarked.

According to preliminary results, Dr Abdullah Abdullah has secured 44.9 percent of the ballots cast and Dr Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai 31.5 percent. With none of the candidate reaching the 50+1 percent mark, a run-off election has become necessary.

The top two candidates must go to the second round of the elections when none of the runners achieves the required target.

[High Peace Council](#) (HPC) head, Salahuddin Rabbani who also participated in the ceremony, criticised the IEC for failing to open polling sites even where there were no security concerns.

Any attempt to disrupt the process would amount to a dangerous joke on the people, something that would lead to instability, he warned.

He added: “Earlier, the enemies of Afghans spread propaganda that elections are a useless exercise and that a final decision is taken by others. But the massive turnout proved such rumours incorrect, showing that only people’s vote can shape the country’s future.”

Rabbani remarked: “On April, 5, people sent a clear message that they will never surrender to oppression and warlordism. People have discharged their responsibility and they are genuine winners.”

Qanuni linked domestic problems to meddling from some elements and lack of governance experience. “Looking at April 27 and 28, (Haft Sawar and Hasht Sawar) through the same prism will be a big mistake...”

He called the absence of a clear strategy after the triumphant of Mujahideen the main reason for continuing war, alleging some countries, including Pakistan, were did not want to see a democratic government in Afghanistan.

He stressed unity among Afghans, saying Pakistan was the only country that was trying to install a puppet government in Afghanistan. But Mujahideen’s strong foiled its nefarious designs.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/29/qanuni-asks-iec-respect-people%E2%80%99s-verdict>



Wahidi urges changes in election commissions

By [Pajhwok reporter](#) Apr 29, 2014 - 17:55

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): Shorn of the required capacity, the main electoral bodies would not be able to hold a transparent presidential runoff vote

, an official said on Tuesday. Speaking to journalists here, Herat Governor Syed Fazlullah Wahidi claimed weaknesses of both commissions had been exposed during the April 5 presidential and provincial polls.

He remarked: "There is no need for trying those already tested. If the polls go to the second round, the commissions won't be able to judge the process responsibly."

Wahidi expressed concern over the functions of both bodies, urging the authorities to bring changes to the commissions.

He feared the election process would be marred by anomalies if no attention was paid to the issue. Genuine votes cast by the people should be respected, Wahidi said.

He accused the Independent Election Commission ([IEC](#)) of failing to ensure order in holding the polls and justice in counting the ballots of Herat's voters.

According to Wahidi, discarding of 100,000 votes in Herat was reflective of improper judgment on the part of IEC.

A civil society activist, Ahmad Shafiq Behrozian, said IEC should give clear information about the transparency of the counting process.

On April, 20, the IECC announced invalidating about 100,000 votes cast at 277 polling sites in Herat due to fraud. But the decision sparked a harsh reaction from leading presidential runner Dr. Abdullah Abdullah.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2014/04/29/wahidi-urges-changes-election-commissions>