

### Karzai to support Sayyaf as presidential candidate'

By [Ahmad Ourishi](#) Aug 14, 2013 - 23:38

KABUL ([PAN](#)): President Hamid Karzai has recommended Abdul Rab Rassoul Sayyaf, a powerful ex-jihadi leader, to be declared a candidate in the presidential election slated for April 5.

Karzai named his choice during a meeting with political party leaders, including opposition, and [former jihadi](#) leaders at the Presidential Palace last week, Syed Fazl Sancharaki, the National Coalition Party spokesman, told a local media outlet.

Sayyaf, the Dawat-i-Islami party chief, Mohammad Qasim Fahim, first vice-president, Atta Mohammad Noor, the governor of Balkh, and Ismail Khan, the water and energy minister, were present at the meeting chaired by Karzai, he said.

The president urged the meeting participants to extend their support for Sayyaf, all, except Noor, endorsed the call, he said.

Mohammad Daud Kalkani, a leader of the Sayyaf party, also confirmed the meeting, but denied Sayyaf had been discussed.

He said Sayyaf only talked about a grand meeting his party planned to organise in Kabul on how to forge a national consensus ahead of the elections. Sayyaf will present his plan at the two-week long gathering aimed at achieving a national consensus on the elections, the lawmaker from Kabul told Pajhwok Afghan News.

President Karzai and all political parties, including the National Coalition of Afghanistan, and influential figures from across the country had been invited to attend the meeting, he said.

All those invited had accepted the invitation and the decision to hold the gathering was final, he said.

A month back, several political leaders, who met at the residence of Qasim Fahim in Kabul, announced the candidacy of Sayyaf in the presidential fray.

That meeting was attended by Sayyaf, Fahim, Ismail Khan, the national coalition leader Abdullah Abdullah, former speaker Yonus Qanoni and other jihadi leaders.

Link: <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2013/08/14/karzai-support-sayyaf-presidential-candidate>



### Irregularities mar voter registration process: FEFA

By [Pajhwok Report](#) Aug 14, 2013 - 21:04

KABUL ([PAN](#)): The Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan (FEFA) on Wednesday said its findings showed insecurity, fraud and violations of the registration procedure marred the first phase of the voter registration campaign.

The foundation said its observers found most documents of applicants were accepted without proper checking at voter registration centers, calling the lack of scrutiny one of the major violations frequently seen.

In a statement, FEFA said the observation findings, conducted between May 26 and July 22, revealed 10,000 individuals in 25 provinces received voter cards without being asked for valid documents. Over 4,000 cards were distributed to under age people in 21 provinces, an obvious violation of the electoral law, it said.

In 134 cases, friends and family members were given voter cards on behalf of the individuals concerned in five provinces. It was observed in 68 cases that one person received more than one card in five provinces -- a major violation.

And in four cases, local commanders and police threatened the election staff and voters, the FEFA observers found. In several provinces, insecurity kept residents away from registration centres, directly affecting the campaign. Security events delayed the registration process at 14 centres in 9 provinces for hours and even for days, the foundation said. FEFA observers noted 16 cases in which opening the centers was delayed and registration staff found absent in 14 provinces, with most such cases taking place at woman voters' registration sites. FEFA also observed growing technical problems with equipment in 11 centers and as a result, many aspirants left without receiving cards.

In some cases, the [IEC](#) staff distributed cards to people without taking their photos. FEFA's observers linked low level of women's participation in the first phase to the establishment of registration sites in inappropriate locations far from their homes. In 13 cases, female sites lacked policewomen, a factor discouraging women from registering. The observation findings showed sensitive materials had not been kept in safe places in nine centers, where the serial numbers of voters' cards did not match the last registered numbers.

The FEFA observed police and local officials threatened IEC staff, observers and applicants in four cases. The foundation recommended awareness programs, improved security and the deployment of female police at woman sites in order to enhance women's participation in the process.

It said the election commission must ensure that valid documents of applicants were checked before they were issued cards. The IEC must also ensure that sensitive materials were kept in safe places and that a working timetable was observed by the IEC staff. It said international institutions should strengthen their observation role in the second phase and observe the process regularly.

Link: <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2013/08/14/irregularities-mar-voter-registration-process-fefafa>



### MP's guards killed in Baghlan roadside blast

By [Pajhwok Report](#) Aug 14, 2013 - 13:00

PUL-I-KHUMRI/MEHAMOOD RAQI ([PAN](#)): Two bodyguards of a [Wolesi Jirga](#) -- lower house -- member were killed in a roadside bombing in northern Baghlan province on Wednesday, officials said.

They were travelling on the Salang-Pul-i-Khumri highway in the morning when came under attack in the Sang-Surkh area of Doshi district, police spokesman Javed Basharat told Pajhwok Afghan News.

However, the lawmaker, Ahmad Shah Ramazan, who represents northern Balkh province in the Wolesi Jirga, was not in the vehicle, Basharat said. Police are investigating the incident, for which no one has so far claimed responsibility.

Ramazan later told reporters he was the target of the blast, but survived because he was not present in the car. Elsewhere, unknown gunmen shot dead two off-duty Afghan Local Police members in the Nijrab district of central Kapisa province.



The gunmen pulled out the ALP members from a corolla car in the Kora area and shot them dead, provincial police chief, Col. Abdul Jalil Shamal, said.

He said it appeared the killing was as a result of a personal enmity and the murderers had escaped. He gave no further details.

Link: <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2013/08/14/mp%E2%80%99s-guards-killed-baglan-roadside-blast>



### Registered voters exceed 300,000: IEC

By [Pajhwok Report](#) Aug 14, 2013 - 16:45

KABUL/BAMYAN CITY ([PAN](#)): The Independent Election Commission ([IEC](#)) on Wednesday said more than 300,000 people have so far been registered for the April 5 presidential and provincial elections.

First phase of the campaign was launched on May 26 at provincial capital level and the second round at district and village level started on July 27.

About three weeks ago, the IEC said Up to 120,000 individuals, including 30,000 women, have been issued voter cards. The panel says the number has risen to more than 300,000.

IEC spokesman Noor Mohammad Noor told Pajhwok Afghan News those registered included 70,000 women and 3,000 Kochi tribesmen, saying the process was going well.

However, residents in some provinces complain the registration process has been slow. Mohammad Ismail Zaki, coordinator at the Civil Societies and Human Rights Network in central Bamyan province, said people in remote areas showed little interest in the registration process because registration centres had been established far away from their homes.

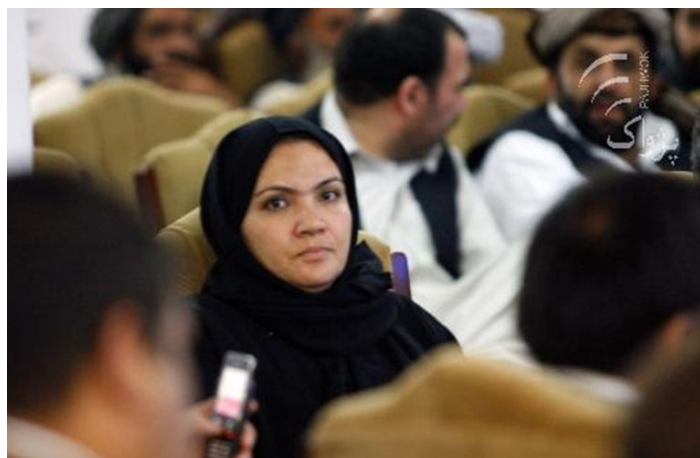
“There are two reasons why Bamyan residents take less interest in the registration process. The first reason is the long distances and the second is the time of the elections because in April snowfall begins in Bamyan,” Zaki said.

He suggested the IEC should send a team to rugged mountainous areas to register people there.

“People in remote parts would not abandon their daily activities to travel hundreds kilometers to reach the district centers and get voter cards”, he said.

But the IEC said more registration centers were being opened and eligible persons could get cards 72 hours ahead of the polling day.

Link: <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2013/08/14/registered-voters-exceed-300000-iec>



### Ghazni officials confirm Fariba's kidnapping

By [Javed Hamim Kakar](#) Aug 14, 2013 - 13:37

KABUL ([PAN](#)): The authorities in Ghazni confirmed on Monday lawmaker Fariba Ahmad Kakar had been abducted by suspected insurgents in the southern province.

The confirmation came two days after reports made headlines that Fariba had been kidnapped along with her three children while traveling from southern city of Kandahar to Kabul on August 10.

A day earlier, local officials in Ghazni said her children had been released and efforts were being made to secure Fariba's release.

An official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told Pajhwok Afghan News the kidnapping issue had been resolved to some extent and would be fully resolved soon.

Fariba's family and the Ministry of Interior had refuted reports that she had been abducted by insurgents, saying she had left for Turkey on August 10 as part of an official visit planned by the parliament.

Other security and civil officials when contacted said they had been directed by higher ups in Kabul not to speak to the media about the incident.

But a foreign news agency quoted Ghazni deputy governor Mohammad Ali Ahmadi as confirming Fariba had been kidnapped and efforts were underway to secure her release.

He said her two daughters and a son had been rescued as a result of an operation that went on to rescue her as well.

Tribal elders have also been engaged in the kidnapping saga to negotiate her release, Ahmadi said.

One of her colleagues, who wished anonymity, also confirmed the kidnapping. However, the Taliban have so far said nothing in this regard.

On August 7, on the eve of Eidul Firt festival, gunmen attacked the vehicle of another female lawmaker in Ghazni, injuring her and husband and killing their daughter.

After that incident, unknown gunmen opened fire at a vehicle carrying the son and a son-in-law of yet another female lawmaker in the same province. The attackers killed her son-in-law and seized her son alive.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2013/08/14/ghazni-officials-confirm-fariba%E2%80%99s-kidnapping>



### Thousands policewomen needed for poll duty: Patang

By [Muhammad Hassan Khetab](#) Aug 15, 2013 - 18:47

KABUL (*PAN*): Acting interior minister Ghulam Mujtaba Patang on Thursday said thousands more policewomen would be required to keep security for female polling centres, saying the election security plan had been finalised.

Addressing police officials in Kabul, Patang said up to 13,000 policewomen would be required to provide security during the April 5 elections and their current strength stood at 2,000.

“Our objective is to provide better security and facilities for the elections and we are confident to do so, but we need cooperation from civil society groups in this regard.”

He recalled there had been numerous challenges in the previous elections, but this time, the ministry had chalked out a comprehensive security plan that would help people take part in great numbers in the democratic exercise, something crucial to deciding the country's fate.

Surveillance teams have been created with enough authority to monitor police performance and keep an eye on possible fraud in the election process, he said.

Link: <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2013/08/15/thousands-policewomen-needed-poll-duty-patang>



### Karzai backs no particular presidential candidate

By [Javed Hamim Kakar](#) Aug 15, 2013 - 17:47

KABUL ([PAN](#)): President Hamid Karzai is not backing any particular candidate for the April 5 presidential election, his spokesman said on Thursday, rejecting some media reports in this regard as baseless.

Aimal Faizi, the presidential spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News the president had started consultations and advisory meetings with political and jihadi leaders on the country's political future, the upcoming elections and other issues of national interest.

He said the meetings would continue, but so far the president had not yet voiced his support for a particular candidate in the presidential poll or encouraged someone in this connection, calling foreign and local media reports in this regard as entirely baseless.

However, a source privy to a consultative meeting at the Presidential Palace last night, told Pajhwok Afghan News on condition of anonymity that the candidacy of Foreign Minister Zalmai Rassoul was discussed at the meeting.

A local media outlet on Wednesday quoted Syed Fazl Sancharaki, the National Coalition Party spokesman, as saying President Karzai had recommended Abdul Rab Rassoul Sayyaf to be declared a candidate in the presidential elections.

Karzai named his choice during a meeting with political party leaders, including opposition, and [former jihadi](#) leaders at the Presidential Palace last week, he said.

Sayyaf, the Dawat-i-Islami party chief, Mohammad Qasim Fahim, first vice-president, Atta Mohammad Noor, the governor of Balkh, and Ismail Khan, the water and energy minister, were present at the meeting chaired by Karzai. The president urged the meeting participants to extend their support for Sayyaf, all, but Noor, endorsed the call, he said. Mohammad Daud Kalkani, a leader of the Sayyaf party, also confirmed the meeting, but denied Sayyaf had been discussed.

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Sayyaf will present his plan at the two-week long gathering aimed at achieving a national consensus on the elections, the lawmaker from Kabul told Pajhwok Afghan News.

President Karzai and all political parties, including the National Coalition of Afghanistan, and influential figures from across the country had been invited to attend the meeting, he said.

All those invited had accepted the invitation and the decision to hold the gathering was final, he said.

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That meeting was attended by Sayyaf, Fahim, Ismail Khan, the national coalition leader Abdullah Abdullah, former speaker Yonus Qanoni and other jihadi leaders.

Link: <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2013/08/15/karzai-backs-no-particular-presidential-candidate>



### Omar Daudzai to run for presidency

By [Javed Hamim Kakar](#) Aug 17, 2013 - 20:09



KABUL ([PAN](#)): Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan Omar Daudzai on Saturday announced his nomination for next year's presidential ballot.

A statement from his newly established office in Kabul said Daudzai was likely to run for the top constitutional office in the April 5, 2014 election.

His office coordinator, Mohammad Sangar Amirzada, told Pajhwok Afghan News they had not yet launched a formal campaign. But they are consulting supporters.

He added: "We continue to hold coordination meetings. Daudzai is our candidate and we have completed initial work in this regard."

Amirzada explained they were in President Hamid Karzai's camp and would accept whatever decision was taken by high-level officials.

He rejected as groundless rumours about Foreign Minister Zalmay Rassoul's nomination by the government. So far President Karzai had not named any candidate, he concluded.

Link: <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2013/08/17/omar-daudzai-run-presidency>



### Munich meeting to discuss polls, peace drive

By [Abasin Zaheer](#) Aug 17, 2013 - 14:02

KABUL ([PAN](#)): Afghan political leaders are scheduled to begin a two-day meeting in Munich, Germany, on next year's elections, security and the stalled peace process later on Saturday.

Afghanistan National Front (ANF) spokesman Mohammad Ali Amiri told Pajhwok Afghan News former vice-president Ahmad Zia Massoud, Mohammad Mohaqiq, ex-spymaster Amarullah Saleh and others would attend the talks.

A German-based group, the Munich Process, has arranged the meeting, which will be addressed through Skype by the Afghans living in Iran, India, Pakistan, Turkey and other countries.

Right and Justice party member Mohammad Asif Ashna said the participants would discuss the country's future and explore solutions to the problems facing it.

"The meeting, which will begin in the evening, is an initiative of the Afghans living in Germany," he said, adding Right and Justice head Mohammad Hanif Atmar might address the gathering through Skype from Kabul.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2013/08/17/munich-meeting-discuss-polls-peace-drive>



### Voter registration in Herat gains momentum

By [Sharafuddin Stanikzai](#) Aug 18, 2013 - 15:52

HERAT CITY ([PAN](#)): Voter registration cards have been distributed to more than 32,000 people in western Herat province, an Independent Election Commission ([IEC](#)) official said on Sunday.

Ahmad Tariq Arian, the IEC official, told Pajhwok Afghan News the cards had been distributed in the provincial capital and 15 districts of the province.

The process was going ahead across the province without any hindrance, he said, explaining 16,500 voters had been issued with cards in Herat City and 16,000 in the districts.

Around 25 percent of the card recipients are women, according to Arian, who said they planned to issue a total of 80,000 cards across the province.