



### **Amarkhel reappointed as IEC secretary**

By [Abasin Zaheer](#) Aug 6, 2013 - 14:37

KABUL ([PAN](#)): President Hamid Karzai on Tuesday reappointed Ziaul Haq Amarkhel as Independent Election Commission ([IEC](#)) secretary.

A spokesman for the Office of Administrative Affairs told Pajhwok Afghan News they had received presidential orders to the effect.

Mohammad Rafi Firdaus said the president had approved Amarkhel's second tenure on the basis of the recommendation from the commission members.

Under a recently-sanctioned law regarding the structure, authority and responsibilities of poll panels, the IEC secretary is to be appointed by the president in line with members' suggestion.

On Aug 3, Dr. Ahmad Yousaf Nuristani and Abdul Rahman Hotaki were elected respectively as Independent Election Commission ([IEC](#)) chairman and deputy chief on Saturday.

IEC member Sharifa Zurmati told Pajhwok Afghan News that Nuristani defeated Sareer Ahmad Barmak while Hotaki outpolled Qazi Suleman Hamid.

They replace Fazal Ahmad Manawi and Abdul Khaliq Hussaini. Also a former lawmaker, Zurmati said Gulalai Achakzai was elected as IEC secretary.

Link: <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2013/08/06/amarkhel-reappointed-iec-secretary>



### **Omar opposes Afghanistan breakup, elections**

By [Javed Hamim Kakar](#) Aug 6, 2013 - 14:29

KABUL ([PAN](#)): Taliban's supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar has rejected the idea of dividing Afghanistan, saying an inclusive Afghan government would be established after the withdrawal of foreigners.

In his Eid message, a copy of which is available to Pajhwok Afghan News, Omar greeted all Afghans on the religious festival and prayed for the acceptance of their prayers and worship during the holy month of [Ramadan](#).

He also congratulated the Taliban on their gains in the battlefields. Omar said this year's Taliban offensive codenamed Khalid Bin Waleed was successfully underway and the opposition forces had been defeated.

"Right now the country is passing through a sensitive phase and we believe only an Islamic, judicious, independent and inclusive system can bring fortunes to the nation," he remarked.

Omar expressed his strong opposition to the division of Afghanistan, saying they would not allow anyone to divide the country on a tribal or ethnic basis.

He also rejected the 2014 presidential elections and asked the Afghans not to take part in the process. Omar said they were not ready to compromise on the Islamic system and a complete stability, saying the Afghans had always rendered sacrifices for the two causes.

The Afghans should not rely on foreigners to run their internal system and construct their country, he said, adding the youth should study both religious and worldly education which he said was a basic need in the today's world.

About foreign policy, Omar said they did not cause harm to anyone and would not allow anyone to use the Afghan soil against others and nor they could tolerate foreign aggression.

Afghanistan as an independent Islamic state wanted relations with foreign countries on the basis of mutual respect, he said.

On the peace talks, he said their contacts with the international community through the Qatar political bureau were about the withdrawal of foreign forces.

He said the Doha office showed the Taliban had an independent and clear stance, accusing foreigners of creating hurdles to resolution of problems.

Omar said they did not want power and believed in establishing an inclusive government in consultations with all Afghans.

“The understating between Afghans will have no problem. Because of their shared principles and culture, they understand each other well.”

He said international aid agencies could continue their activities in Afghanistan in areas of health and providing food to refugees if they had no connections with foreign intelligence agencies.

Omar directed the Taliban to prevent intimidation of people and make further efforts at avoiding civilian casualties.

He claimed most civilians were killed by the opposition and vowed to punish fighters if they were found guilty in this regard.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2013/08/06/omar-opposes-afghanistan-breakup-elections>



### **Kuchis demand mobile voter registration teams**

By [Zabihullah Ihsas](#) Aug 6, 2013 - 15:51

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (*PAN*): *Kuchi* tribesmen on Tuesday asked the government to create mobile voter registration centres for them in northern Balkh province.

They warned 95 percent of nomadic families could be deprived of getting voter cards if mobile registration services were not provided for them.

The tribesmen, who live in nine of the province 14 districts, said voter registration centres were located away from them and they could not travel long distances to get the cards.

Ghopi, a Kuchi from Kushanda district, said most nomadic families lived in mountainous areas where they had pastures, while voter registration centres had been in plain areas.

He said they reached the district centre on foot in six hours because there were no transportation services. If the government did not send them mobile registration teams, most of Kuchis would be deprived of the cards, he said.

Another Kuchi tribesman in the Bargah area of Chamtal district, Mir Alam, said the nomads could not easily leave their areas because of their life style.

He said currently most Kuchi tribesmen were busy grazing their flocks in mountains and they would not ascend to plain areas.

He said they were interested in obtaining the voter cards but could not travel to the district centre leaving behind their animals.

Mir Alam said if the government wanted Kuchis to take part in the elections, it had to provide them with voter cards.

A Kuchi affairs official Mohammad Farooq said 24,000 nomadic families, comprising 140,000 individuals lived in nine districts of Balk.

He said the elections were a national process and the nomads should not be ignored. He said if mobile teams were not dispatched to Kuchi tribesmen, a majority of them would be left out.

Independent Election Commission chief for Balkh, Ajmal Ahadi, said his office had officially been shared the issue of nomads and a letter had been sent to the main election office in Kabul.

He said the provincial election office lacked the authority to take a decision on its own in this regard and awaited a response from the main office in Kabul.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2013/08/06/kuchis-demand-mobile-voter-registration-teams>



### Efforts on to make secure all polling sites: MoI

By [Muhammad Hassan Khetab](#) Aug 7, 2013 - 10:11

KABUL ([PAN](#)): The Ministry of Interior on Wednesday said 259 polling centres marked as insecure would have little impact on the entire election process.

The Independent Election Commission ([IEC](#)) provided a list of 7,000 polling stations to security organs about six months ago to chalk out security plans for the sites.

The MoI last week said it had prepared a comprehensive security plan for 6,845 polling centers and shared the same with the IEC.

But the IEC is still concerned about security for 159 polling centres, saying security for these sites is yet to be assured.

IEC Secretary Ziaul Haq Amarkhel on Wednesday told Pajhwok Afghan News security organs, after spending five months on assessing the situation, had told them insurgents were in control of areas where the polling centres were located.

He said these centres were in Kunar, Nuristan, Kapisa, Maidan Wardak, Parwan, Sar-i-Pul, Zabul, Badakhshan, Helmand, Ghazni, Herat and Farah provinces.

He asked security departments to make efforts at maintaining security for the remaining 259 polling centres.

“The elections are very important, no one should be deprived of their right to vote on the pretext of insecurity and if relevant organs could not maintain security perennially, they should do it at least for a couple of weeks” Amarkhel said.

The MoI admits 259 polling centres remain under threat, but insists it does not mean the centers would be insecure throughout the remaining eight months to go for elections.

MoI spokesman Ghulam Siddiqui Siddique said the eight-month gap was an opportunity for security organs to come up with proper steps for maintaining security.

“The polling centres under threat are very less in number compared to the total 7000 the IEC has shared with the MoI. The problem will have no effect on the entire election process,” he believed.

He said no one should worry about election security because the strength of Afghan police had increased to 157,000 and Afghan Local Police had been raised in various regions.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2013/08/07/efforts-make-secure-all-polling-sites-moi>



### No voter registration centers in 12 districts yet

By [Meer Agha Nasrat Samimi](#) Aug 12, 2013 - 18:09

KABUL ([PAN](#)): Voter registration centres could not be opened in a dozen of districts as part of the second round of the campaign for the April 5 presidential and provincial council elections due to security concerns, an official said on Monday.

First phase of the nationwide exercise began on May 24 in capitals of all the 34 provinces and the second phase started in July at district level. So far 300,000 people have been registered.

The Independent Election Commission ([IEC](#)) spokesman, Noor Mohammad Noor, told Pajhwok Afghan News that a total of 399 voter registration centres were to be opened in the second round, but the number had been reduced to 387.

He said the election commission had requested the Ministry of Interior to ensure security for voter registration centres during their inauguration, adding the government's writ did not prevail in four districts of three provinces, where the opening of voter centres had no chance.

He named the troubled districts as Kakar in southern Zabul, Desho and Baghran in Helmand and Nawa in Ghazni.

However, he said if security for the mentioned areas was assured, the IEC was ready to open voter registration centre there.

He also said materials needed for voter registration could not be dispatched to Zankhan district in Ghazni, Wama, Mandol and Kamdesh in eastern Nuristan, Chapa Dara district in Kunar and Giyan in Paktika due to security threats.

But the materials were being sent to the Ala Saeed district of central Kapisa and Khogyani district of Ghazni, where voter registration centres would be opened soon, he said.

Noor said talks between the interior ministry and the IEC were in place on security related issues in the mentioned areas.

<http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2013/08/12/no-voter-registration-centres-12-districts-yet-iec>