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A SURVEY OF THE AFGHAN PARLIAMENT

KEY FINDINGS

JULY 2012

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	6
METHODOLOGY	7
ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND POLITICAL ISSUES	9
ELECTORAL LAW	15
ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS	22
REPRESENTATION AND PARTY AFFILIATION	26
DEMOGRAPHICS	30
CONCLUSION.....	33
APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT	34

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan has held four national elections since the fall of the Taliban. Unfortunately, each process has revealed significant flaws in the country's electoral framework and highlighted the need for comprehensive electoral reform to create conditions that can increase the legitimacy of Afghanistan's electoral outcomes.

Currently, DI implements USAID's Afghanistan Electoral Reform and Civic Advocacy program (AERCA). AERCA's two primary program components are (1) to support Afghan led advocacy efforts for electoral and democratic reform and (2) to conduct research that can inform and encourage debate on electoral and democratic reform in Afghanistan.

This survey report contributes to AERCA's second program component by presenting the results of a survey of Afghan parliamentarians on issues of governance and electoral reform.

METHODOLOGY

The objective of this quantitative survey was to better understand the opinions of the members of the Afghan parliament on their country's current electoral framework, key changes that have been proposed by Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission (IEC) and on elections issues generally. DI compiled a total of 38 questions most of which were closed-ended. The questionnaire was divided into four main thematic sections, excluding basic demographic data: (1) the electoral system and general political issues, (2) the electoral law, (3) the role of institutions, and (4) representation and party affiliation. Before the start of fieldwork, DI pilot-tested the questionnaire with two former MPs and 22 representatives of civil society organizations to ensure the clarity of individual questions and to identify issues that might affect survey quality.

DI commenced data collection on April 25, 2012 and completed it on June 10, 2012. Two male and two female researchers from DI's Kabul office conducted interviews. DI utilized three main methods of data collection among MPs: self-administered surveys, traditional face-to-face interviews, and face-to-face interviews conducted with the use of Apple iPads. DI interviewed a total of 176 MPs from both the upper and lower houses. The DI research team surveyed 121 MPs from the lower house (48.6% of the members of the Wolesi Jirga) and 55 from the upper house (54% of the members of the Meshrano Jirga). With a sample size of 176 out of a population of 351, the survey has a margin of error of $\pm 5.22\%$ at a 95% confidence level with an estimate of 50 percent response distribution.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND POLITICAL ISSUES

An overwhelming majority of Afghan parliamentarians are in favor of adopting a new electoral law in Afghanistan. When asked if Afghanistan needs a new election law, nearly 90% of respondents agreed. A large majority of Afghan lawmakers want to either modify or replace the current voting system. Afghan parliamentarians demonstrate mixed feelings regarding the current electoral process. A majority of Afghan MPs surveyed, 56.8% have a less than moderate amount of faith in the Afghan electoral process, with 41.5% of

MPs reporting a fair amount of faith and 15.3% reporting they have no faith at all in the process. A mere 6.8% of respondents have strong faith in their electoral process.

A majority of Afghan lawmakers, 58.5%, support reconciliation with the Taliban under the current political atmosphere. However, more than a quarter of respondents do not support reconciliation and 12.5% of respondents refused to answer the question, suggesting that the respondents may have considered the question too sensitive.

The overwhelming majority of Afghan MPs surveyed, 71%, think the president has too much power in Afghanistan's current political system. Nearly two-thirds of respondents, 64.8%, believe that the president wields too much authority in making decisions on Afghanistan's electoral system.

A large majority, 72.7% of surveyed MPs, believe international forces should stay as long as necessary in Afghanistan. A very small percentage of parliamentarians, 3.4%, feel that troops should leave the country within the year.

A majority of respondents, 55.1%, believe that presidential elections will be held in 2014 as scheduled. The data suggests that 34.7% of Afghan parliamentarians are doubtful that the legally required presidential elections will be held as scheduled. However, of those who feel the election will take place as scheduled, a healthy majority of 56.7% feel they will be more transparent than the last election.

ELECTORAL LAW

A majority of MPs surveyed support quotas for representation in parliament, especially the quota for women's representation. Of those who feel quotas are necessary, 53.4% feel they should be used for women. Nearly two out of three respondents, 59.6%, believe that the quota for women's representation should represent a mandatory minimum percentage of representation for women. An overwhelming 81.8%, of those who agree quotas are necessary believe they should not be used to increase Kuchi representation.

Two out of three respondents, 65.9%, strongly agree that educational requirements should be a criterion for candidate eligibility. A strong majority, 84.7%, think that the electoral law should specify a campaign spending limit. A large plurality of respondents, 48.9%, disagrees that districts should be the basis for electoral constituencies rather than provinces. Almost all MPs believe the current voter registration process needs much improvement.

A large majority of surveyed MPs, 74.4%, agree that candidates should be allowed to appeal the decisions made by the IEC and the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC). An overwhelming majority of Afghan MPs surveyed, 89.8%, feel that electoral laws should clearly define the distinction between criminal acts and electoral disputes.

ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS

Most respondents, 79%, believe that the National Assembly is the primary lawmaking body in the country. Nearly two out of three respondents, 65.3%, believe the National Assembly should be responsible for drafting a new electoral law. A fifth of Afghan MPs surveyed feel that the IEC should be responsible for drafting a new electoral law.

A slight plurality of respondents, 33.5%, feels that the IEC should be in charge of candidate vetting. Slightly more than a fifth of Afghan MPs surveyed feel that the ECC should be in charge of candidate vetting.

More than a third of Afghan parliamentarians surveyed, 31.2%, believe that the president should appoint the Independent Election Commission's leaders with the approval of the National Assembly. A third of respondents, 33%, believe that the president should make appointments to the ECC with the approval of the entire National Assembly.

A significant plurality of Afghan MPs surveyed, 47.2%, believe that ultimate authority over electoral disputes should lie with the ECC. More than three out of four respondents, 77.3%, feel that internationals should serve on the ECC.

REPRESENTATION AND PARTY AFFILIATION

A significant majority of Afghan MPs surveyed, 69.9%, believe that their primary constituency for representation is their province. More than half of Afghan parliamentarians surveyed, 59.1% do not consider themselves members of the political opposition. Less than a third, 30.7%, feels they are a part of the political opposition. Three-fourths of Afghan MPs surveyed do not identify with a political party at all.

A very large majority of respondents, 72.7%, report they do not identify with any political coalition while only 14.8% of respondents do report identifying with a coalition.

CONCLUSION

The survey revealed that the members of Afghanistan's National Assembly largely agree that electoral reform is necessary to strengthen the country's electoral system and improve the legitimacy of future electoral outcomes in Afghanistan. The parliamentarians generally agree with international analysts that too much power is concentrated in Afghanistan's executive branch and believe the democratic legal framework should empower the country's major lawmaking body, which they believe to be the National Assembly, to provide more balance to executive authority.

The survey also reveals that given the opportunity to legislate on electoral matters, the National Assembly would likely take action to change the country's electoral laws to make significant modifications to Afghanistan's electoral system, to introduce safeguards for the appointment of electoral commissioners, and to confirm the necessity of instruments to ensure women's representation.

For electoral reform to be achieved through a legislative process, Afghanistan's executive must be supportive, and thus far, there have been no signals from the presidential palace to indicate whether or not President Karzai is supportive of the reforms suggested by the IEC. Should President Karzai act to support such an initiative, he will be taking great strides to support the strengthening of Afghan democracy. Should he decide not to support the IEC initiative, he will miss an important opportunity to further develop his country's democracy and to positively contribute to his legacy as the first president of post-Taliban Afghanistan.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan has held four national elections since the fall of the Taliban. Afghans have voted twice to elect representatives to the Wolesi Jirga, the lower house of Afghanistan's legislative body, the National Assembly, and twice in presidential elections. Unfortunately, each electoral process has revealed significant flaws in the country's democratic framework. The 2009 presidential election was marred by widespread fraud and significantly tarnished the legitimacy of Afghanistan's electoral management bodies. The 2010 parliamentary election was also fraud ridden and was characterized by the interference of an illegitimate ad-hoc special electoral court created through executive order. Both processes highlighted the need for comprehensive electoral reform to create conditions that can increase the legitimacy of Afghanistan's electoral outcomes.

Since 2009, Democracy International (DI) has worked to support the strengthening of Afghanistan's electoral processes, both through international election observation missions as well as by supporting domestic electoral reform initiatives. Currently, DI implements USAID's Afghanistan Electoral Reform and Civic Advocacy program (AERCA). AERCA's two primary program components are (1) to support Afghan led advocacy efforts for electoral and democratic reform and (2) to conduct research that can inform and encourage debate on electoral and democratic reform in Afghanistan. To contribute to the achievement of these objectives, DI has conducted some of the most comprehensive public opinion research on Afghan democracy to date. This survey report contributes to this body of research by presenting the results of a survey of Afghan parliamentarians on issues of electoral reform.

At the time of this report's release, Afghanistan's Ministry of Justice was reviewing a draft electoral law that was produced by the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan (IEC). The IEC's draft law includes provisions that would attempt to address a number of the flaws identified by observers over the course of the last decade. Most notably, perhaps, is the IEC's attempt to create a mixed electoral system that would introduce seats reserved for political party affiliated candidates. In addition to the proposed change to a mixed electoral system is the introduction of a new electoral disputes body. In addition to the draft electoral law, a draft IEC structure law is being considered. If adopted, such a law would attempt to strengthen the independence of the electoral commission and, potentially, introduce new mechanisms for the appointment of the commission's secretariat. If adopted, these new laws would help address some of the key inadequacies in the country's current electoral system and improve the conditions for future Afghan elections.

While the draft electoral law has been submitted to Afghanistan's Ministry of Justice, at the time of this report's release, it was unclear when the ministry would conclude its review of the law and submit it to the National Assembly. If the law is eventually submitted to the National Assembly, it will be the members of the Afghan parliament who will decide its fate. DI's survey attempted to gauge the opinions of these elected representatives on many of the issues that the draft law attempts to address. This report presents the results of this survey. We hope that it can help inform the debate surrounding electoral reform in Afghanistan for Afghan stakeholders as well as the international community.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this quantitative survey was to better understand the opinions of the members of the Afghan parliament on Afghanistan's current electoral framework, key changes that have been proposed by Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission (IEC), and the issue of electoral reform generally. To achieve this research objective, DI conducted a quantitative survey among Afghan members of parliament (MPs) from both the Meshrano Jirga (the upper house of the National Assembly) and the Wolesi Jirga (the lower house of the National Assembly).

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

DI's research team conducted an extensive desk review of the existing literature on issues related to elections in Afghanistan before compiling survey questions. The researchers identified a number of unsettled issues concerning the electoral framework in Afghanistan. DI staff also conducted a number of qualitative interviews with government officials, MPs, leaders of political parties, leaders of civil society organizations and international experts in order to explore critical issues related to the legal framework for elections in Afghanistan. DI compiled a total of 38 questions most of which were closed-ended. The questionnaire was divided into four main thematic sections, excluding basic demographic data: (1) the electoral system and general political issues, (2) the electoral law, (3) the role of institutions, and (4) representation and party affiliation. The questionnaire was translated into Dari and Pashto.

PILOT TEST

Before the start of fieldwork, DI pilot-tested the questionnaire to ensure the clarity of individual questions and to identify issues that might affect survey quality. DI pilot-tested the questionnaire with two former MPs and 22 representatives of civil society organizations who were enrolled in a research training program on electoral issues. The questionnaire was modified based on the results of this pretest. During the pretest, the average time for survey administration was between 15 and 20 minutes.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

DI utilized three main methods to collect data among MPs: self-administered surveys, face-to-face paper-based interviews, and face-to-face surveys conducted with the use of Apple iPads. DI staff distributed the questionnaires at parliamentary committee meetings and later collected completed questionnaires from MPs. Such self-administered surveys represent 59.1% of the total sample. Face-to-face paper-based interviews accounted for 16.5% of the total interviews. DI also deployed iPads to conduct face-to-face interviews of 24.4% of the total sample.

SAMPLE SIZE

DI interviewed a total of 176 MPs from both upper and lower houses. The DI research team surveyed 121 MPs from the lower house (48.6% of the members of the Wolesi Jirga) and 55 from the upper house (54% of the members of the Meshrano Jirga). The number of MPs surveyed represents about 50 percent of the National Assembly.

ESTIMATION

With a sample size of 176 out of a population of 351, the survey has a margin of error of $\pm 5.22\%$ at a 95% confidence level with an estimate of 50 percent response distribution. DI also conducted 10 qualitative interviews with administrative staff of the parliament in order to identify potential effects of non-response on the results, considering the 50 percent of parliamentarians who were not surveyed. The study did not reveal any patterns of selection bias. The 50 percent of MPs, who did not participate in the survey, likely did not do so because of any particular pattern that could affect the results. Two major reasons for non-participation were a lack of interest in survey research and busy schedules.

FIELDWORK

DI commenced data collection on April 25, 2012, with two male and two female researchers from DI's Kabul office responsible for conducting interviews. Senior staff from both houses of the parliament helped DI distribute questionnaires at committee meetings to complete self-administered surveys. DI's research staff conducted face-to-face interviews either at the parliament or at the personal residences of MPs over a period of 46 days and completed data collection on June 10, 2012.

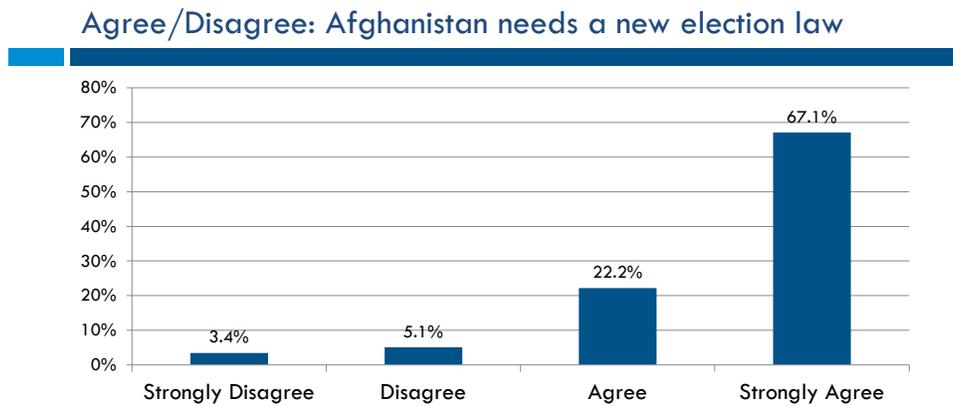
RESEARCH TEAM

The research team is composed of DI's international and Afghan research staffs based in Kabul. Team members include Jed Ober, Dr. Min Zaw Oo, Dr. Mohammad Nadir Sahak, Fauzia Rahimi Jamal, Mohammad Hassan Wafaey, Maryam Safi, Sabawoon Ahmadzai and Matthew Crane.

2.0 ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND POLITICAL ISSUES

An overwhelming majority of Afghan parliamentarians are in favor of adopting a new electoral law in Afghanistan. When asked if Afghanistan needs a new election law, nearly 90% of respondents agreed. A majority, 67.1%, of Afghan members of parliament surveyed strongly agree with the statement with a very small minority, 8.5%, disagreeing, strongly or otherwise, that new laws are needed.

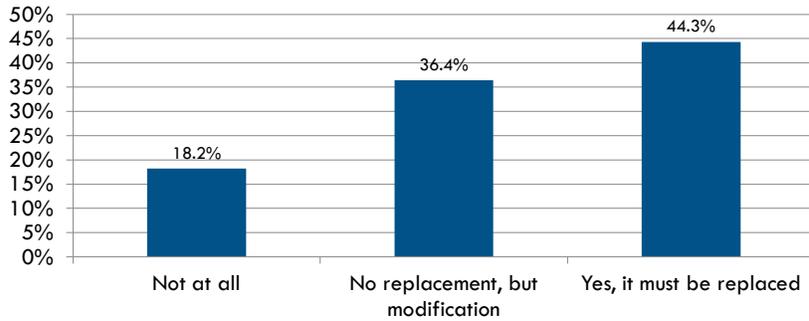
Figure 1: Does Afghanistan need a new electoral law?



A large majority of Afghan lawmakers want to either modify or replace the current voting system. A strong plurality, 44.3% of Afghan parliamentarians surveyed agree that Afghanistan needs a new voting system, but the opinion is hardly ubiquitous. Fully 36.4% of respondents feel that the old system can be salvaged with modifications, and only 18.2%, nearly a fifth of the respondents, feel that no change is required in the system.

Figure 2: Should the current voting system be replaced by an alternative?

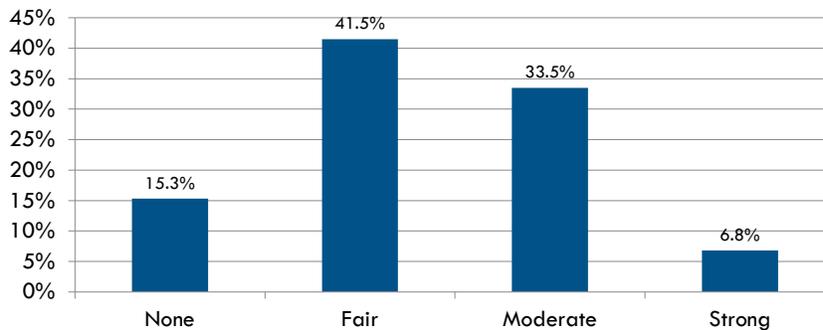
The current voting system should be replaced by an alternative.



Afghan parliamentarians demonstrate mixed feelings regarding the current electoral process. A majority of Afghan MPs surveyed, 56.8% have a less than moderate amount of faith in the Afghan electoral process, with 41.5% of MPs reporting a fair amount of faith and 15.3% reporting they have no faith at all in the process. A mere 6.8% of respondents have strong faith in their electoral process.

Figure 3: Confidence in the electoral process

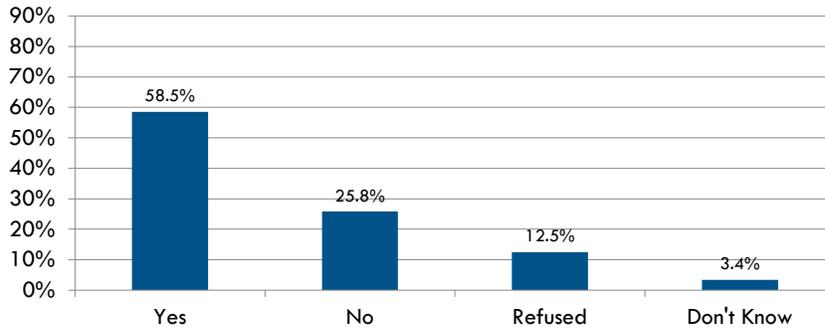
How much faith do you have in the electoral process?



A majority of Afghan lawmakers, 58.5%, support reconciliation with the Taliban under the current political atmosphere. However, more than a quarter of respondents do not support reconciliation and 12.5% of respondents refused to answer the question, suggesting that the respondents may have considered the question too sensitive.

Figure 4: Reconciliation with the Taliban

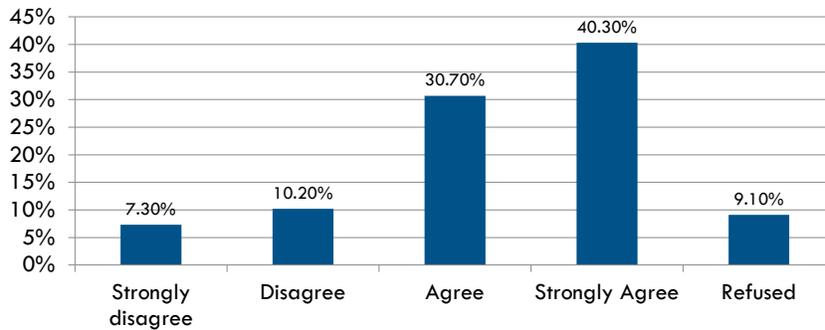
Under the current political atmosphere, do you support reconciliation with the Taliban



The overwhelming majority of Afghan MPs surveyed, 71%, think the president has too much power in Afghanistan's current political system. Among them, 30.7% of respondents simply agree that the president has too much power and 40.3% strongly agree. A mere 17.5% of respondents disagreed, strongly or otherwise, that the President has too much power.

Figure 5: The president has too much power in Afghanistan's current system.

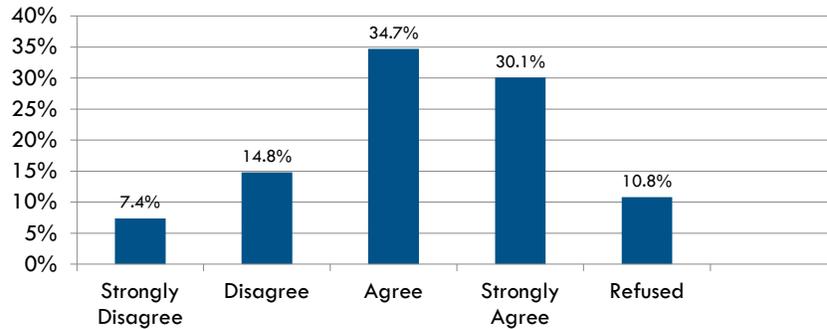
Agree/Disagree: The president has too much power in Afghanistan's current system.



Nearly two-thirds of respondents, 64.8%, believe that the president wields too much authority in making decisions on Afghanistan's electoral system while 34.7% of respondents agree and 30.1% strongly agree. However, 22.2% of the respondents do not feel the president has too much power in making decisions on Afghanistan's electoral system.

Figure 6: Presidential authority in making decisions on Afghanistan's electoral system

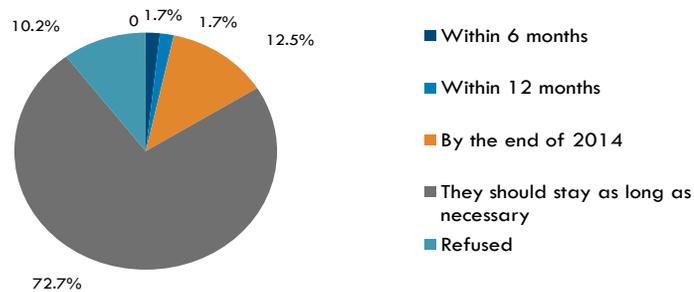
Agree/Disagree: The president has too much power in making decisions on Afghanistan's electoral system.



A large majority, 72.7% of surveyed MPs, believe international forces should stay as long as necessary in Afghanistan. A very small percentage of parliamentarians, 3.4%, feel that troops should leave the country within the year. Slightly more, 12.5%, are comfortable with a 2014 withdrawal timeline.

Figure 7: How soon should international forces leave Afghanistan?

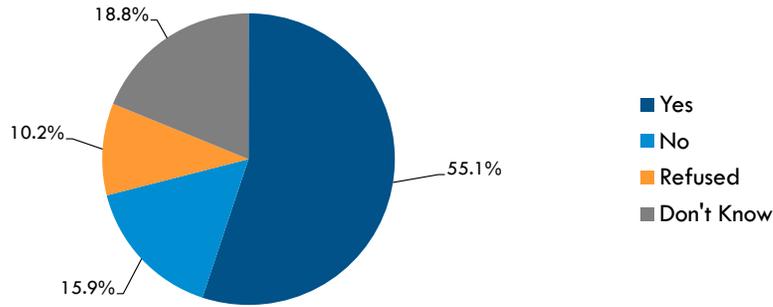
How soon should international forces leave Afghanistan?



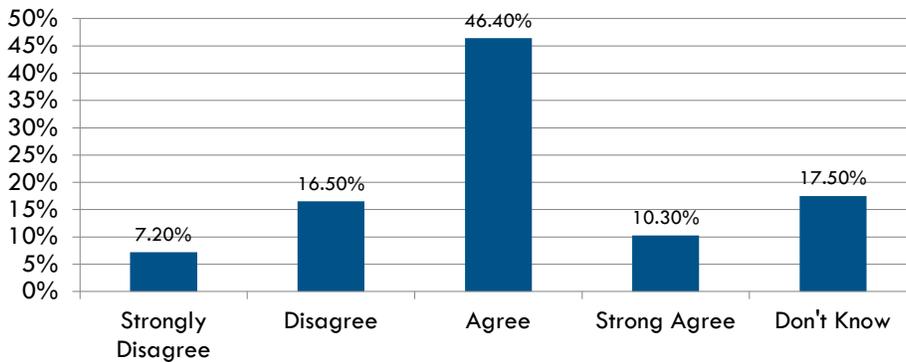
A majority of respondents, 55.1%, believe that presidential elections will be held in 2014 as scheduled. Interestingly, 18.8% of respondents are unsure if elections will be held, and 15.9% do not believe they will be held. The data suggests that 34.7% of Afghan parliamentarians are doubtful that the legally required presidential elections will be held as scheduled. However, of those who feel the election will take place as scheduled, a healthy majority of 56.7% feel they will be more transparent than the last election. Of those who feel there will be elections in 2014, only 23.7% believe it will be a less transparent process than the previous one.

Figure 8: Expectation towards presidential elections in 2014

Do you expect there will be presidential elections in 2014?



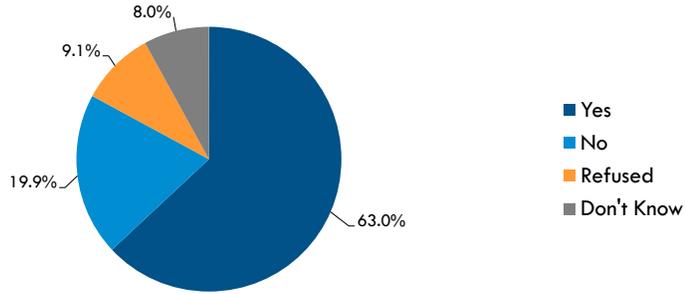
If yes, do you agree that the next presidential elections in 2014 will be more transparent than the previous elections?



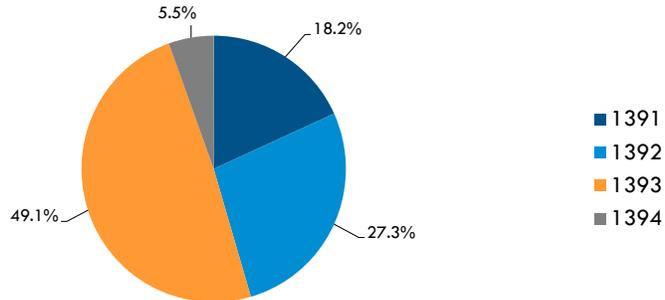
A majority of Afghan parliamentarians surveyed, 63%, feel that the IEC should hold municipal and village elections. A fifth of respondents do not feel municipal and village elections should be conducted by the IEC. Of those who believe municipal elections should be held, nearly half, 49.1%, feel they should be held in 2015 (Afghan year 1393). Only 27.3% of MPs who think municipal and village elections should be held think they should be held in 2014 (Afghan year 1392), and a smaller minority, 18.2%, feel they should be held in 2013 (Afghan year 1391). A very small minority, 5.5% of the respondents, feels that such elections should be delayed until 2016 (Afghan year 1394).

Figure 9: Timing for municipal and village elections

Do you think the Independent Election Commission should hold municipal and village elections?



If so, in what (Afghan) year?

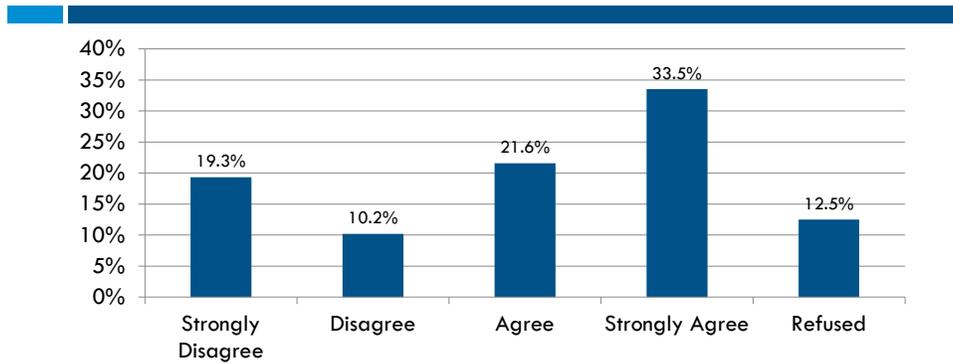


3.0 ELECTORAL LAW

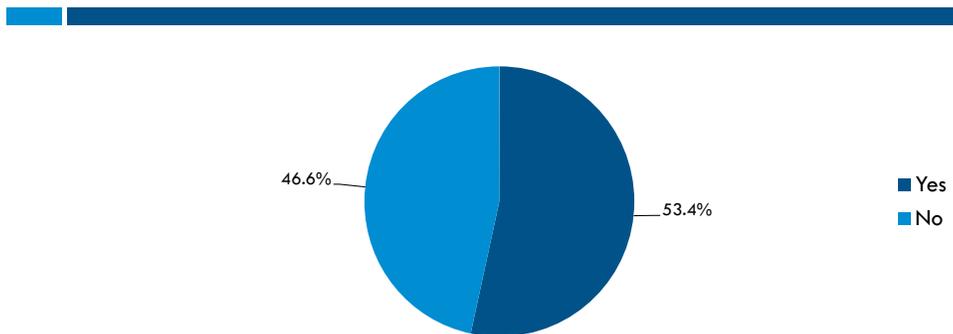
A majority of MPs surveyed support quotas for representation in parliament, especially the quota for women’s representation. A majority of respondents, 55.1%, feel that quotas are required for adequate representation, although about 29.5% disagree. A fifth of the respondents, 19.3%, strongly disagree that quotas are required, and nearly a third of respondents, 29.5%, feel that quotas are not necessary. Of those who feel quotas are necessary, 53.4% feel they should be used for women. An overwhelming 81.8%, of those who agree quotas are necessary believe they should not be used to increase Kuchi representation.

Figure 10: Support for representation quotas

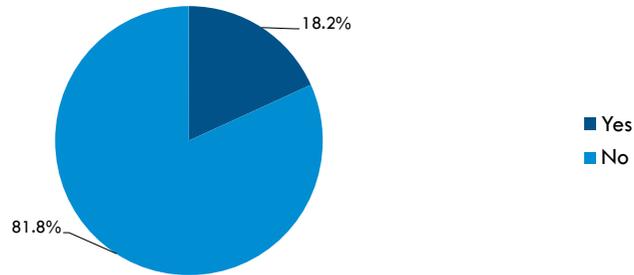
Agree/Disagree: Afghanistan needs quotas for representation in parliament.



If yes, should the quotas be for women?



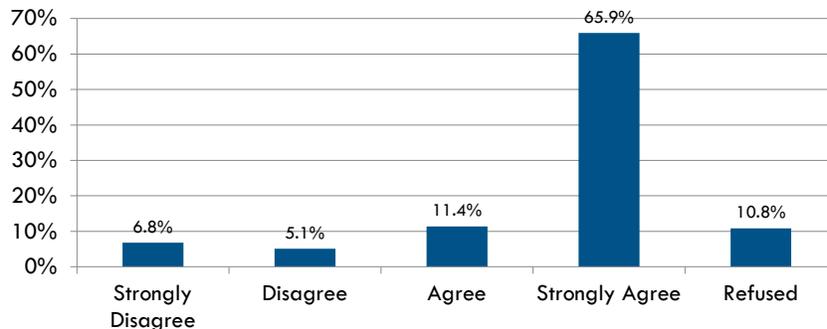
If yes, should the quotas be for Kuchis [nomads]?



Two out of three respondents, 65.9%, strongly agree that educational requirements should be a criterion for candidate eligibility. More than one out of ten respondents, 11.4%, agree that education should be a criterion at all. Only 11.9% of parliamentarians surveyed feel that education should not be including in the criteria to become a candidate. Interestingly, most MPs, who refused to reveal their level of education, also refused to give their opinion on the education requirement for candidate eligibility.

Figure 11: Educational level as a criterion for candidate eligibility

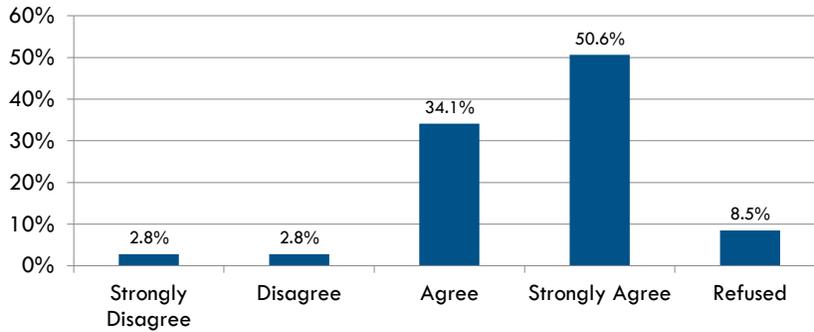
Agree/Disagree: A certain level of education should be a part of parliamentary candidate eligibility criteria.



A strong majority, 84.7%, think that the electoral law should specify a campaign spending limit. A majority, 50.6%, strongly agree that such a limit is necessary. Only 5.6% of respondents feel that campaign spending limits should not be addressed in Afghanistan's electoral law.

Figure 12: Campaign spending limit

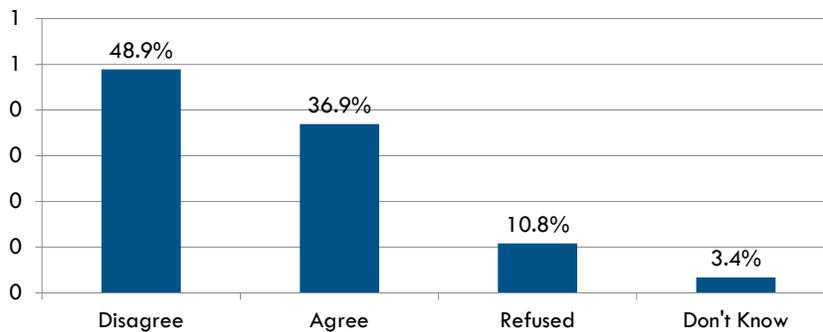
Agree/Disagree: The Election Law should specify a monetary value as a campaign spending limit.



Although most Afghan MPs support changes to the current voting system and the electoral law, a large plurality of respondents, 48.9%, disagree that districts should be the basis for electoral constituencies rather than provinces. A minority, 36.9% of respondents, agree that districts would make for better representative constituencies than would provinces.

Figure 13: Preference of province-based over district-based constituencies

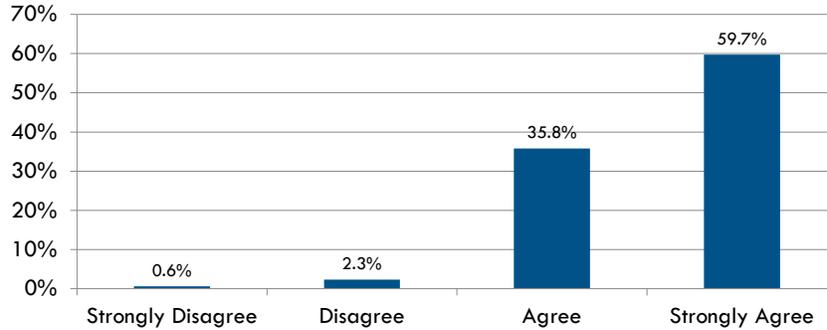
Agree/Disagree: Parliamentary electoral constituency should be based on districts rather than provinces.



Almost all MPs believe the current voter registration process needs much improvement. An overwhelming majority, 95.5%, of MPs surveyed feel the voter registration process requires significant improvements. A majority 59.7% strongly agree with the need to strengthen the voter registration process. Only 2.9% of respondents feel the process does not need much improvement.

Figure 14: Need to improve voter registration

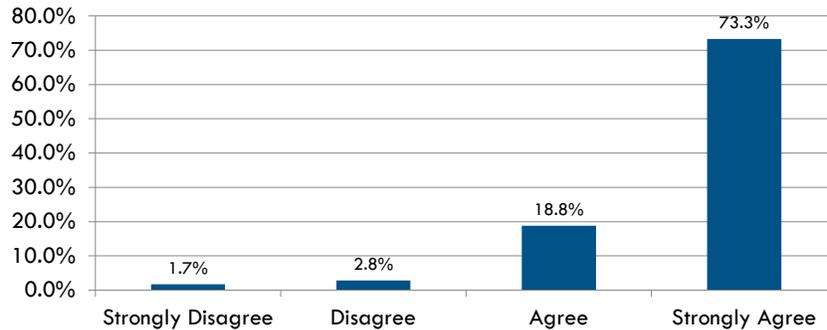
Agree/Disagree: The current voter registration process needs much improvement.



More than 90% of the respondents believe the election law should specify more details of the obligations of print and broadcast media, including state-run media. Nearly three out of four respondents strongly agree with this sentiment. A mere 4.5% do not feel that the election law should detail the obligations of the media.

Figure 15: The obligations of mass media specified by election laws

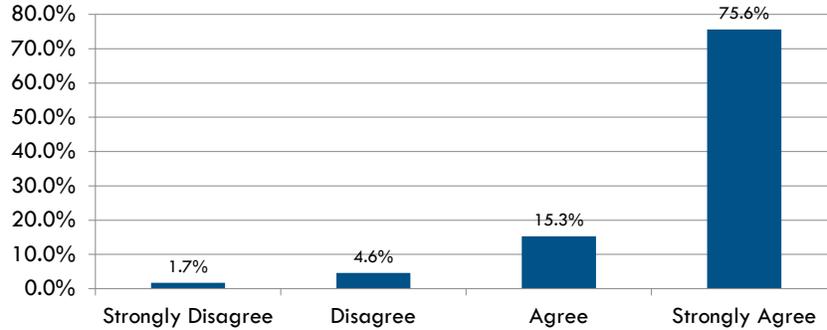
Agree/Disagree: The Election Law should specify more details of the obligations of print and broadcast media, including state-run media.



Over ninety percent of Afghan members of parliament surveyed agree that candidates should be required to declare the value of their personal assets. Three quarters of the respondents strongly agree that personal finances of candidates should be public information. Only 6.3% of respondents feel that candidate's personal finances should remain private.

Figure 16: Declaration of personal finances

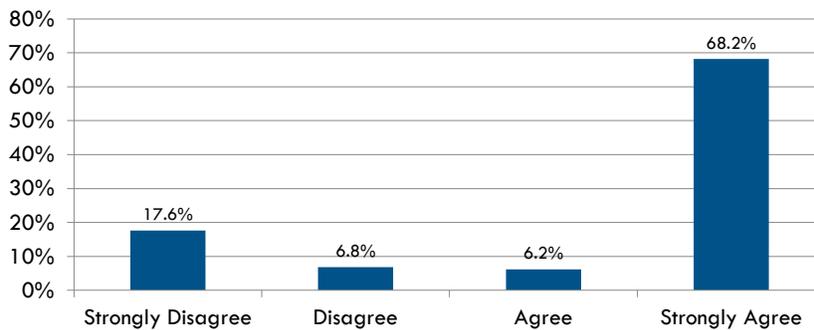
Agree/Disagree: All candidates should declare the value of personal financial and property ownership.



A large majority of surveyed MPs, 74.4%, agree that candidates should be allowed to appeal the decisions made by the IEC and the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC). Among them, a majority of respondents, 68.2%, strongly agree. A sizeable minority of 24.4% disagree that decisions made by these bodies should be subject to appeal, with 17.6% of respondents strongly disagreeing.

Figure 17: Should candidates be allowed to appeal the decision of IEC/ ECC

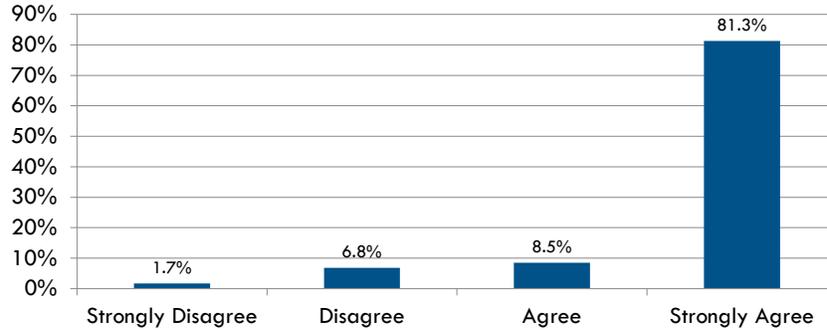
Agree/Disagree: Candidates should be allowed to appeal the decisions made by Independent Electoral Commission/ Electoral Complaints Commission.



An overwhelming majority of Afghan MPs surveyed, 89.8%, feel that electoral laws should clearly define the distinction between criminal acts and electoral disputes, with 81.3% of respondents strongly agreeing. Less than ten percent of respondents disagree that electoral laws should distinguish between electoral disputes and criminal acts.

Figure 18: Distinction between criminal acts and electoral disputes

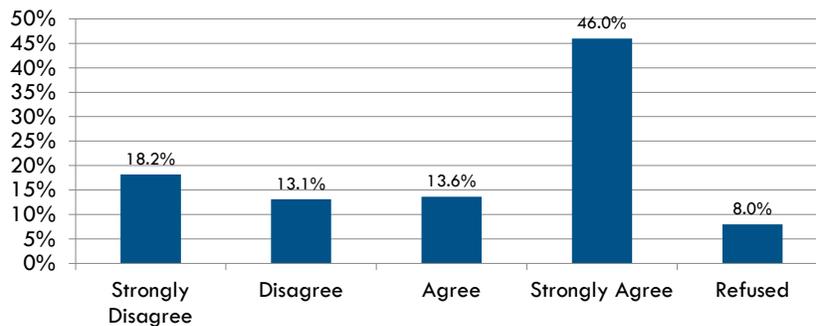
Agree/Disagree: Electoral laws should define clear distinction between criminal acts and electoral disputes.



Nearly two out of three respondents, 59.6%, agree that the quota for women’s representation in the Wolesi Jirga should represent a mandatory minimum percentage of representation for women, without limiting the number of seats women can hold. A plurality of 46% strongly agrees that this should be the case with a sizable minority of 31.3% in disagreement that gender quotas should not have a maximum limit. Nearly a fifth of respondents strongly disagree with the statement. Almost all woman MPs agree that the amount of seats women can hold in the legislature should not be constrained by the quota. The data shows that opinion is equally divided among their male counterparts.

Figure 19: The quota for women’s representation and maximum limit

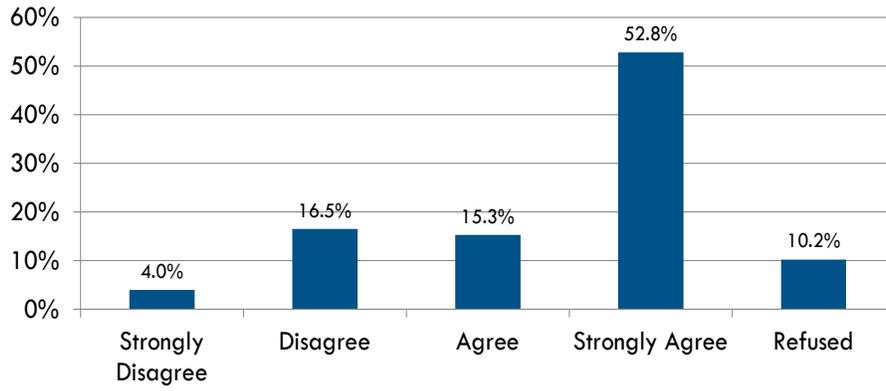
Agree/Disagree: The quota for women’s representation in the Wolesi Jirga should represent a mandatory minimum percentage of representation, without limiting a maximum number of seats women can hold.



More than two out of three respondents, 68.1%, agree that to strengthen the voter registration process, female ID cards should bear pictures. A majority, 52.8%, strongly agree that female cards should bear pictures. A fifth of respondents disagree that female ID cards should have pictures, but a very small percentage, 4%, strongly disagree. Large majorities of both genders agree that pictures are necessary on female voter ID cards.

Figure 20: Female ID cards bearing pictures to strengthen voter registration

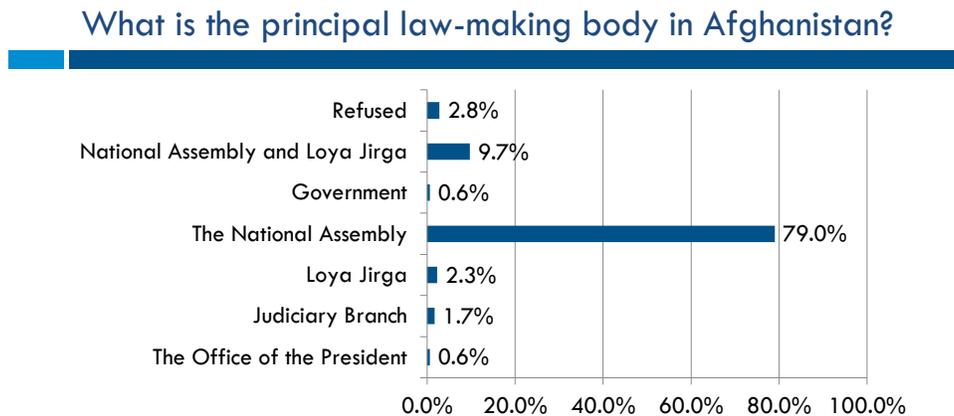
Agree/Disagree: To strengthen the voter registration process, female ID cards should bear pictures.



4.0 ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS

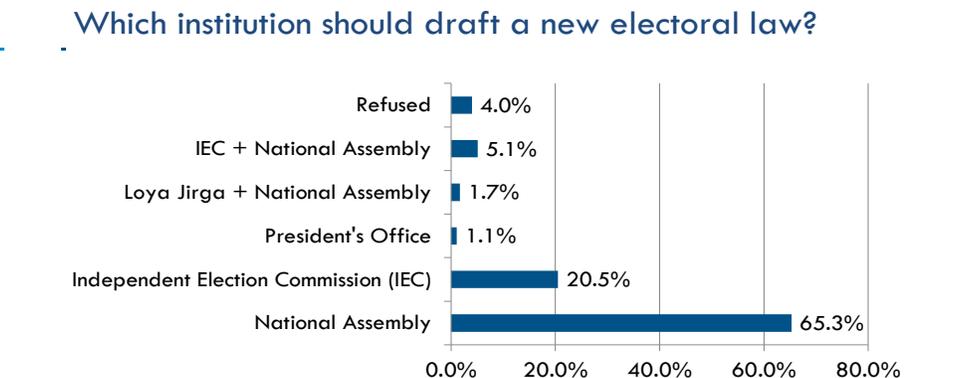
Most respondents, 79%, believe that the National Assembly is the primary lawmaking body in the country. The only other institution that received a significant percentage was the combination of the National Assembly and the Loya Jirga (9.7%). Interestingly, the bodies registering the lowest percentages were those associated with the executive branch.

Figure 21: The principal law-making body in Afghanistan



Nearly two out of three respondents, 65.3%, believe the National Assembly should be responsible for drafting a new electoral law. A fifth of Afghan MPs surveyed feel that the IEC should be responsible for drafting a new electoral law. Again, the President's office received the lowest percentage (1.1%).

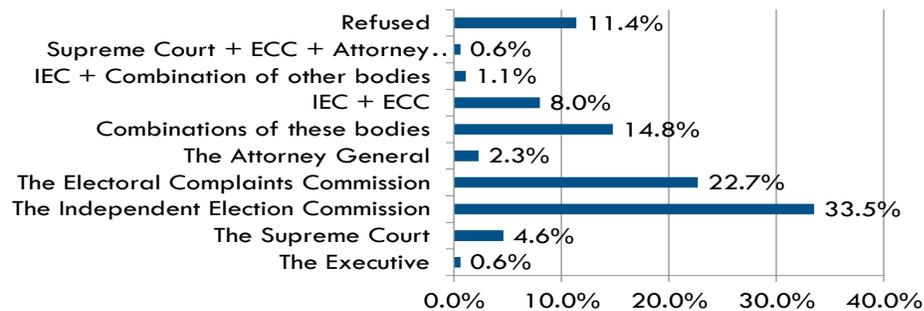
Figure 22: Institutions responsible for drafting a new electoral law



A slight plurality of respondents, 33.5%, feels that the IEC should be in charge of candidate vetting. Slightly more than a fifth of Afghan MPs surveyed feel that the ECC should be in charge of candidate vetting while 8% of respondents opine that both the IEC and the ECC should be responsible. A small minority of 4.6% feel that the Supreme Court should be responsible for candidate vetting. Similar to other questions, the executive branch receives the lowest rating of preference.

Figure 23: Institutions responsible for candidate vetting

Which institution do you think should be responsible for candidate vetting?

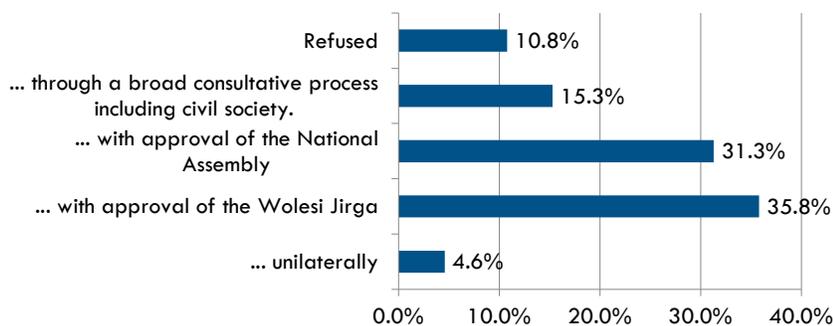


More than a third of Afghan parliamentarians surveyed, 35.8%, believe that the president should appoint the commission's leaders with the approval of the Wolesi Jirga. Just under a third of respondents, 31.3%, feel that appointments should be made with the approval of the National Assembly, while 15.3% of MPs feel that the appointments should be made through a broad consultative process. A mere 4.6% of respondents feel that the president should make appointments to the IEC unilaterally. Overall, most Afghan MPs prefer the parliament to take a role in appointing the leadership of the IEC.

Figure 24: The role of institutions to appoint the leadership of the IEC

How should the president appoint the leadership of the Independent Election Commission?

The president should appoint the election commission's leader . . .

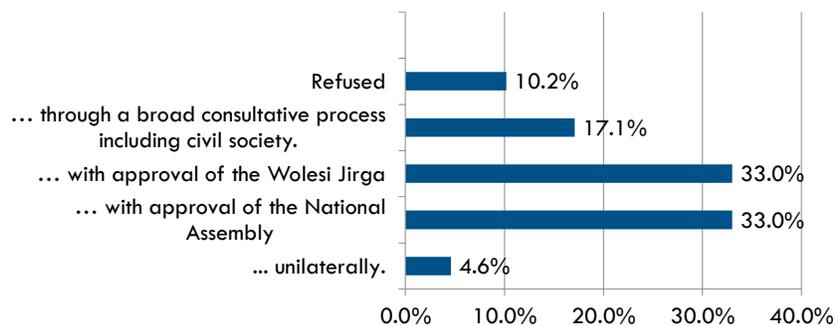


A third of respondents believe that the president should make appointments to the ECC with the approval of the entire National Assembly and a separate third feels that only the Wolesi Jirga should approve appointees to the ECC. Again, a very small portion, 4.6%, feels the president should make appointments unilaterally. Similar to the appointment of IEC leadership, Afghan lawmakers want to promote the role of the parliament to select the leaders of the ECC.

Figure 25: The role of institutions to appoint the leadership of the ECC

How should the president appoint the leadership of the Electoral Complaints Commission?

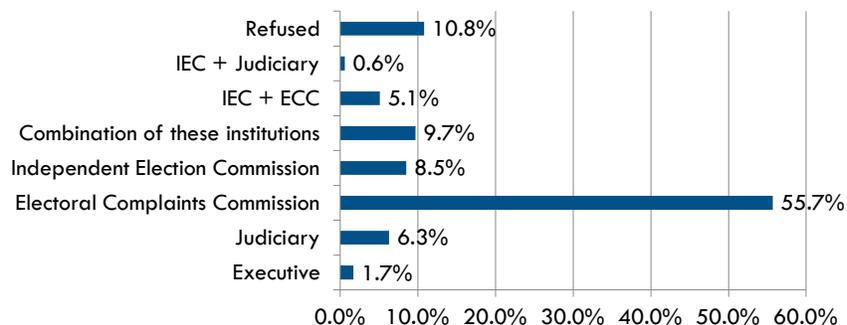
The president should appoint the leadership of the ECC . . .



A solid majority of MPs surveyed, 55.7%, believe that the ECC has jurisdiction over electoral disputes. Interestingly, only 8.5% of respondents feel that the IEC has jurisdiction, and only 5.1% felt that the two institutions share jurisdiction. Very few respondents, 1.7%, believe the executive has jurisdiction over electoral disputes.

Figure 26: Jurisdiction over electoral dispute

Which institution has jurisdiction over electoral disputes?

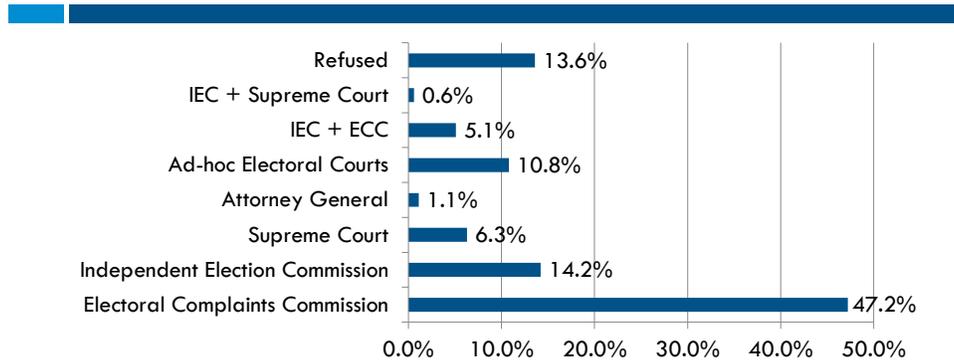


A significant plurality of Afghan MPs surveyed, 47.2%, believe that ultimate authority over electoral disputes should lie with the ECC. Only 14.2% of respondents feel that the

IEC should have final authority in disputes. A combined 17.1% of respondents believe the courts (either Supreme or Ad-hoc) should have final authority over disputes.

Figure 27: Final authority over electoral disputes

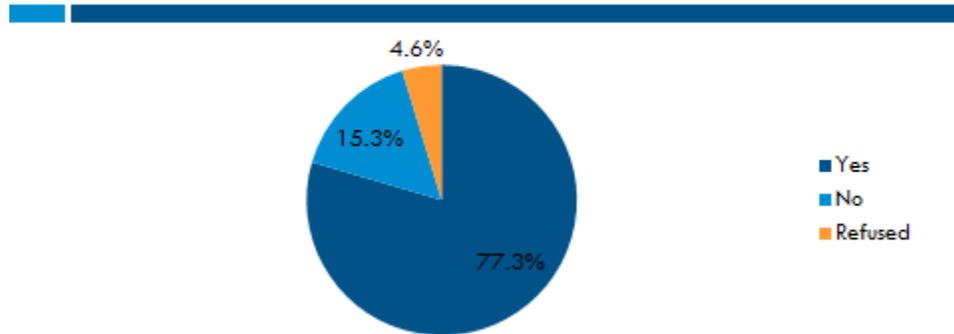
Which institution do you believe should have final authority over electoral disputes?



More than three out of four respondents, 77.3%, feel that internationals should serve on the ECC while 15.3% believe they should not serve on the ECC.

Figure 28: Internationals serving as commissioners on ECC

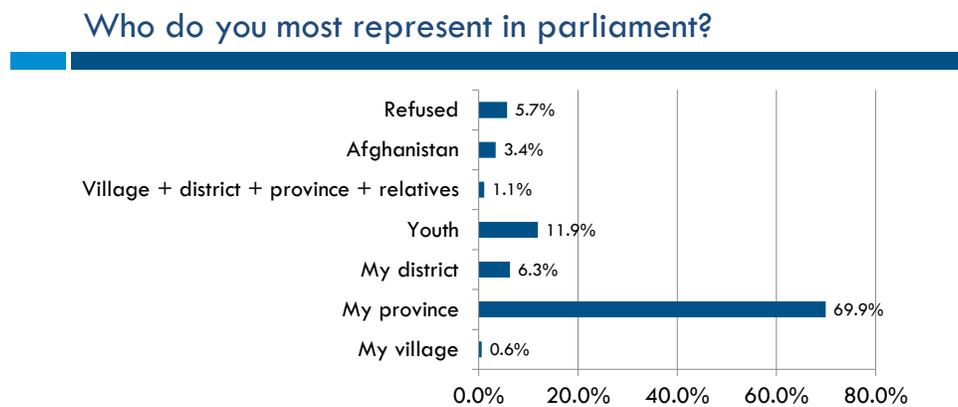
Do you think that internationals should serve as commissioners on the Electoral Complaints Commission?



5.0 REPRESENTATION AND PARTY AFFILIATION

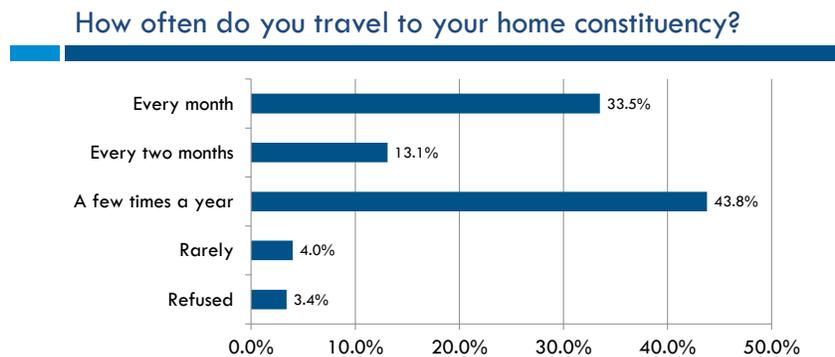
A significant majority of Afghan MPs surveyed, 69.9%, believe that their primary constituency for representation is their province. A very small percentage of respondents, 6.3%, believe they represent their district, and even smaller percentages claimed to represent their village or Afghanistan as a whole. Interestingly, more than ten percent of respondents claim that their primary constituency is youth, regardless of geography or ethnicity.

Figure 29: Constituency representation



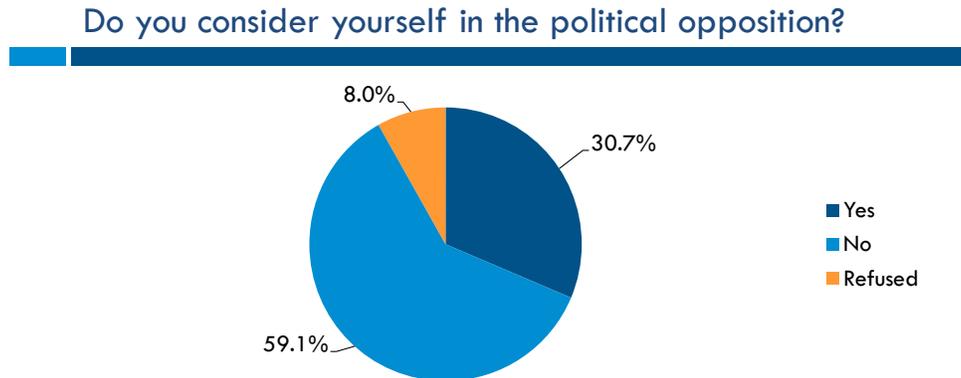
A plurality of respondents, 43.8%, reported travelling back to their home constituencies a few times a year. A third of the respondents travel home every month and 13.1% travel home every two months. A very small proportion of respondents, 4%, reported rarely travelling back to their home constituencies.

Figure 30: Frequency of travel to home constituency



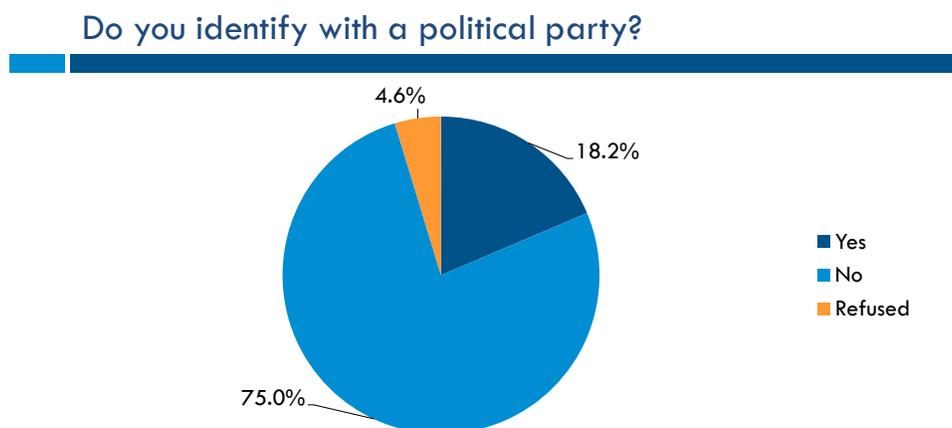
More than half of Afghan parliamentarians surveyed, 59.1%, do not consider themselves a member of the political opposition. Less than a third, 30.7%, feels they are a part of the political opposition.

Figure 31: Affiliation with political opposition

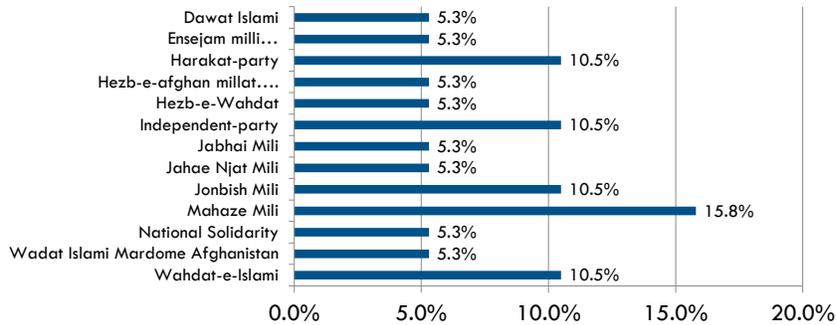


Three-fourths of Afghan MPs surveyed do not identify with a political party at all. Less than a fifth of respondents, 18.2%, report identifying with a party. Of those who identify with a party, 15.8% say they are members of Mahaz-e-Milli, more than any other single party. However, since the small number of respondents, 32 out of 176, identify with a political party, the distribution among party affiliations in this data may not be meaningful.

Figure 32: Party affiliation



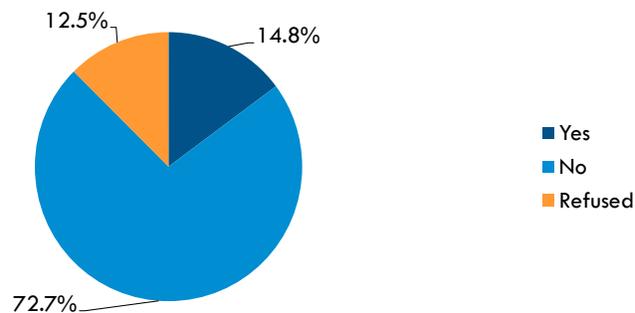
If yes, which party?



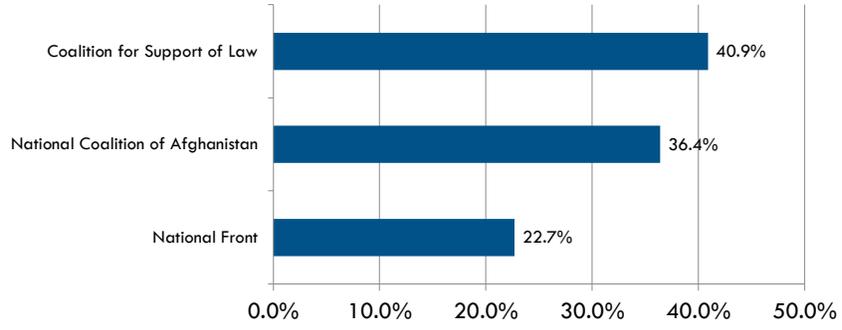
Again, a very large majority of respondents, 72.7%, say they do not identify with any political coalition while only 14.8% of respondents do identify with a coalition. Of respondents who identify with a coalition, 40.9% identify with the Coalition for the Support of Law, 36.4% with the National Coalition of Afghanistan, and 22.7% with the National Front. However, because of the small number of respondents, 26 out of 176, reporting their affiliation with a coalition at all, these percentages may not reflect the actual ratio of coalition members in the parliament.

Figure 33: Affiliation with a political coalition

Do you identify with a political coalition?



If yes, which coalition?



6.0 DEMOGRAPHICS

The best represented province of Afghan MPs surveyed is Kabul with 11.0% of respondents. Herat and Ghazni are also well represented within the sample; with 7.6% and 6.2% of MPs reporting they represent those provinces, respectively. The least represented provinces in this survey are Khost, Uruzgan, and Panjsher.

Figure 34: Provincial distribution of respondents

Which province do you represent?

Khost	0.7%	Samangan	2.1%	Kabul	11.0%	Uruzgan	0.7%
Nangarhar	3.5%	Jawzjan	1.4%	Kapisa	3.5%	Ghor	2.1%
Laghman	2.1%	Saripul	2.8%	Parwan	1.4%	Bamyan	2.1%
Herat	7.6%	Faryab	4.8%	Wardak	2.1%	Panjsher	0.7%
Nooristan	3.5%	Badghis	2.7%	Logar	1.4%	Daikundi	4.8%
Badakhshtan	2.1%	Farah	4.8%	Ghazni	6.2%	Kunar	4.1%
Takhar	2.1%	Nimroz	2.1%	Paktia	2.8%	Kuchis (Nomads)	0.7%
Kunduz	2.1%	Hilmand	2.1%	Paktika	2.1%		
Balkh	3.5%	Kandahar	2.8%	Zabul	1.4%		

A majority of respondents, 54.6%, have received a university education or earned a Bachelor's Degree, 12.5% possess a Master's Degree, and 17.6% have completed high school.

Figure 35: Level of education of respondents

Level of Education

Level	Percent of Respondents
Informal schooling only (including Madrasa)	2.8%
Secondary education, incomplete (classes 7 - 9)	0.6%
Secondary Education, Complete (finished class 9)	0.6%
High School (classes 10 to 12)	17.6%
University Education or Bachelor Degree	54.6%
Masters Degree	12.5%
Refused	11.4%

A plurality of Afghan parliamentarians surveyed, 28.4%, are Pashtun. Hazaras are also well represented within the sample, with 17.1% and Tajiks with 13.1%. Interestingly, on-

ly 10.2% identified themselves as ethnic Afghans and 15.9% of respondents refused to identify with any ethnic group. Kyrgyz and Pashae were particularly underrepresented with .6% each.

Figure 36: Ethnic distribution of respondents

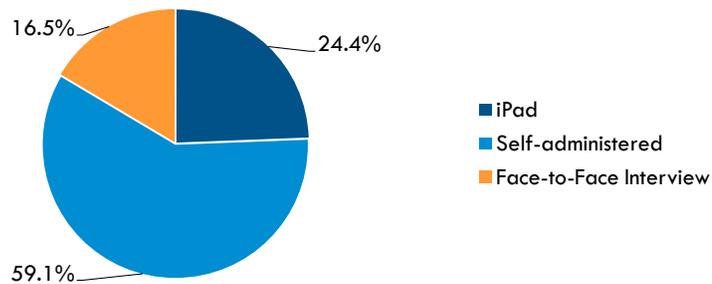
To which ethnic group do you belong?

Ethnic Group	Percent	Ethnic Group	Percent
Pashtun	28.4%	Nuristani	2.3%
Tajik	13.1%	Afghan	10.2%
Uzbek	5.1%	Arab	2.8%
Turkmen	1.7%	Aimaq	2.3%
Hazara	17.1%	Pashae	0.6%
Kyrgyz	0.6%	Refused	15.9%

A majority of respondents, 59.1%, self-administered the survey, with 24.4% of respondents completing the survey via face-to-face interviews with the use of an iPad, and 16.5% of respondents through traditional face-to-face interviews.

Figure 37: Response method

Response Method



Among the MPs surveyed, 68.8% of respondents were from the lower house and 31.3% were from the upper house. 71.2% of the respondents are male and 28.9% are female.

Figure 38: Distribution between upper and lower houses

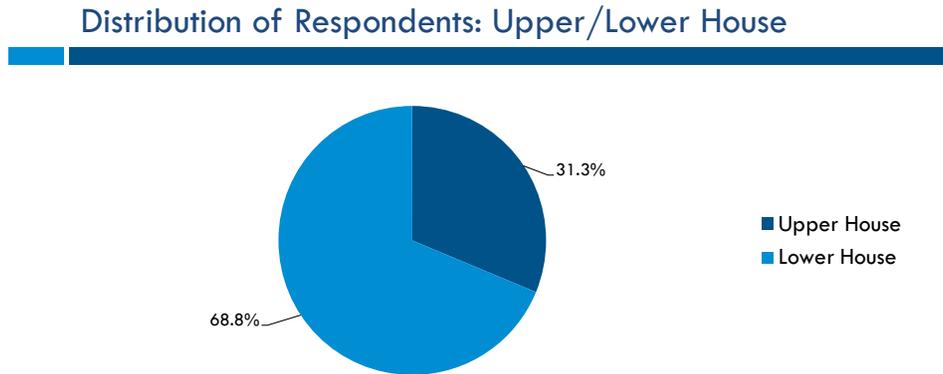
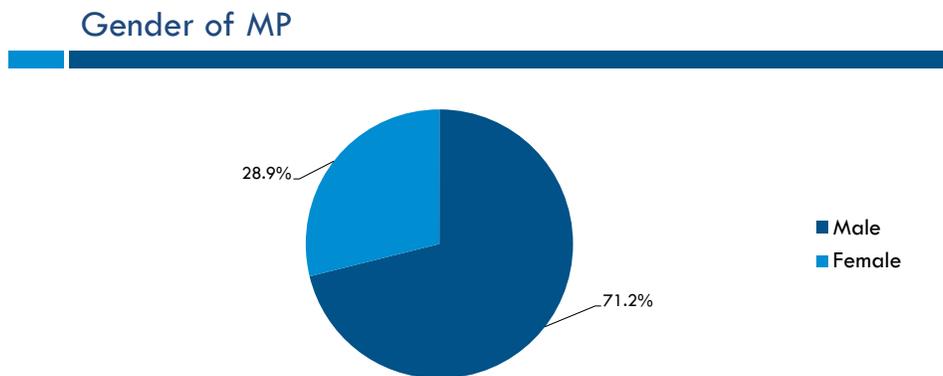


Figure 39: Gender distribution of respondents



7.0 CONCLUSION

This report detailed the results of a survey of Afghan parliamentarians administered by Democracy International from April to June of 2012. The survey revealed that the members of Afghanistan's National Assembly largely agree that electoral reform is necessary to strengthen the country's electoral system and improve the legitimacy of future electoral outcomes in Afghanistan. The parliamentarians generally agree with international political analysts that too much power is concentrated in Afghanistan's executive branch and believe the democratic legal framework should empower the country's major law-making body, which they believe to be the National Assembly, to provide more balance to executive authority.

The survey also reveals that given the opportunity to legislate on electoral matters, the National Assembly would likely take action to change the country's electoral laws to make significant modifications to Afghanistan's electoral system, to introduce safeguards for the appointment of electoral commissioners, and to confirm the necessity of instruments to ensure women's representation.

The survey shows that the views of the National Assembly on issues of electoral reform are largely consistent with those of international election experts. Given the opportunity to take action, the National Assembly would likely look favorably upon the current draft electoral law produced by the IEC. The question now is whether the body will be given the opportunity to legislate on these issues. In the past, changes to the country's electoral law have been passed through presidential decree, not through legitimate legislative processes. Most observers are skeptical, based on this past history, that such changes can be accomplished through Afghanistan's legislative process.

For the legislative process to be successful, Afghanistan's executive branch must be supportive, and thus far, there have been no signals from the presidential palace to indicate whether or not President Karzai is indeed supportive of the reforms suggested by the IEC. As is too often the case in Afghanistan, the fate of this initiative lies in the hands of the executive branch. Should President Karzai act to support such an initiative, he will be making great strides to support the strengthening of Afghanistan's democracy. Should he decide not to support the IEC led initiative, he will miss an important opportunity to further develop his country's democracy and to positively contribute to his legacy as the first president of post-Taliban Afghanistan.

8.0 APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Survey among Members of Parliament on Election Law (Draft)

Democracy International is conducting this survey among the members of parliament to highlight their positions on various issues, especially on electoral laws. DI is currently implementing a USAID-funded project to strengthen electoral system in Afghanistan. This survey may take approximately 15 minutes of your time. This survey intends to maintain anonymity of the respondents. The result of this survey will be shared with MPs, Afghan government officials, civil society organizations, international community and other interested parties.

Do you have any question before we start the survey?

Can we start the survey interview now?

(M1) Surveyor ID.....

(M2) Method of survey. Check one by the surveyor.

(M2) Face-to-face interview on paper

(M3) Self-administered on paper

(M3A) Date of distribution is (Month/Day/Year)

(M3B) Date of collection (Month/Day/Year).....

(M4) Face-to-face on Ipad

(M5) Survey start time (24hour format).....end time.....

Electoral System and General Political Issues

Q1. Afghanistan needs a new election law.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q2A. The current voting system should be replaced by an alternative.

Not at All	No Replacement but Modification	Yes, it must be replaced.	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	999	998

Q2B. How much faith do you have in the electoral process in both presidential and parliamentary elections?

None	Fair	Moderate	Strong	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q3. Under the current political atmosphere, do you support reconciliation with the Taliban?

No	Yes	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	998	999

Q4. Do you believe the President has too much power in Afghanistan's current system?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q5. Do you believe the President has too much power in making decisions on Afghanistan's electoral system?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q6. How soon should international forces leave Afghanistan?

Within 6 months	Within 12 months	By the end of 2014	They should stay as long as necessary	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q8A. Do you expect there will be presidential elections in 2014?

No	Yes	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	999	998

Q8B. If yes, do you agree that the next presidential elections in 2014 will be more transparent than the previous elections?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q9A. Do you think the Independent Election Commission should hold municipal and village elections?

No	Yes	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	999	998

Q9B. If so, what (Afghan) year?

Electoral Law

Q10A. Do you think that Afghanistan needs quotas for representation in parliament?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q10B. If yes, who should the quotas be for? (Respondents may choose more than one)

Women	Kuchis	Other(Write)	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	999	998

Q11. A certain level of education should be a part of parliamentary candidate eligibility criteria.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q12. The Election Law should specify a monetary value of campaign spending limit.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q13. Parliamentary electoral constituency should be based on districts rather than provinces.

Disagree	Agree	Don't Know	Refused
1	3	999	998

Q14. The current voter registration process needs much improvement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q15. The election law should specify more details of the obligations of print and broadcast media, including state-run media.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q16. All candidates should declare the value of personal financial and property ownership.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q17. Candidates should be allowed to appeal the decisions made by Independent Electoral Commission/Electoral Complaints Commission.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q18. Electoral laws should define clear distinction between criminal acts and electoral disputes.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q19. The quota for women's representation in the Wolesi Jirga should represent a mandatory minimum percentage of representation for women, without limiting a maximum number of seats woman can hold.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q20. To strengthen voter registration process, female ID cards should bear pictures.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Role of Institutions

Q21. What is the principle law-making body in Afghanistan?

1	The Office of the President
2	Judiciary Branch
3	Loya Jirga
4	The National Assembly
5	Other (Write)
999	Don't Know
998	Refused

Q22. Which institution should draft a new electoral law? Choose one.

Parliament	1
The Independent Election Commission	2
President's Office	3
Other (Write)	4
Don't Know	999
Refused	998

Q23. What institution do you think should be responsible for candidate vetting?

1	The Executive
2	The Supreme Court
3	The Independent Election Commission
4	The Electoral Complaints Commission
5	The Attorney General
6	The International Community

7	Other (write)
999	Don't Know
998	Refused

Q24. How should the president appoint the leadership of the Independent Election Commission?

1	The President should appoint the election commission's leaders unilaterally
2	The President should appoint the commission's leaders with approval of the Wolesi Jirga
3	The President should appoint the commission's leaders with approval of the National Assembly
4	The President should appoint the commission's leaders through a broad consultative process including civil society
999	Don't Know
998	Refused

Q25. How should the president appoint the leadership of the Electoral Complaints Commission?

1	The President should appoint the election commission's leaders unilaterally
2	The President should appoint the commission's leaders with approval of the Wolesi Jirga
3	The President should appoint the commission's leaders with approval of the National Assembly
4	The President should appoint the commission's leaders through a broad consultative process including civil society
999	Don't Know
998	Refused

Q26. Which institution has jurisdiction over electoral disputes?

1	Executive
2	Judiciary
3	The Electoral Complaints Commission
4	The Independent Election Commission
5	A combination of these institutions
6	Other (Write)

999	Don't Know
998	Refused

Q27. Which institution do you believe should have final authority over electoral disputes?

1	The Independent Election Commission
2	The Electoral Complaints Commission
3	The Supreme Court
4	The Attorney General
5	Ad-hoc electoral courts
6	Other (Write)
999	Don't Know
998	Refused

Q28. Do you think internationals should serve as commissioners on the Electoral Complaints Commission?

No	Yes	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	999	998

Representation and Party Affiliation

Q29. Who do you most represent in parliament?

1	My Village
2	My Province
3	My District
4	My Family and Relatives
5	Other(Write)
999	Don't Know
998	Refused

Q30. How often do you travel to your home constituency?

Every Month	Every two months	A few times a year	Rarely	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q31. Do you consider yourself in the political opposition?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	3	4	999	998

Q32A. Do you identify with a political party?

No	Yes	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	998	999

Q32B. If yes, which party _____.

Q33A. Do you identify with a political coalition?

No	Yes	Don't Know	Refused
1	2	998	999

Q33B. If yes, which coalition?

1. Rights and Justice
2. National Front
3. National Coalition of Afghanistan
4. Other _____

Demography and Constituency

Q34. Which province do you represent? (Circle one)

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Kabul | 10. Nangarhar | 19. Samangan | 28. Kandahar |
| 2. Kapisa | 11. Laghman | 20. Juzjan | 29. Zabul |
| 3. Parwan | 12. Kunar | 21. Sar-I-Pul | 30. Uruzgan |

- | | | | |
|------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| 4. Wardak | 13. Nooristan | 22. Faryab | 31. Ghor |
| 5. Logar | 14. Badakhshan | 23. Badghis | 32. Bamyan |
| 6. Ghazni | 15. Takhar | 24. Herat | 33. Panjshir |
| 7. Paktia | 16. Baghlan | 25. Farah | 34. Dehkondi |
| 8. Paktika | 17. Kunduz | 26. Nimroz | |
| 9. Khost | 18. Balkh | 27. Helmand | |

Q35. What is the highest level of education you completed? (Do not read; code from the answer)

Never went to school	0
Informal schooling only (including Madrasa)	1
Primary School, incomplete (classes 1 to 5)	2
Primary School, complete (finished class 6)	3
Secondary education, incomplete (classes 7 to 9)	4
Secondary education, complete (finished class 9)	5
High School (classes 10 to 12)	6
University education or Bachelor Degree	7
Graduate Degree, M.A., M.Sc., MPH, MBA, MD, Ph.D.	8
Don't know (volunteered only)	999
Refused	998

Q36. What ethnic group do you belong? (Single response only)

Pashtun	Tajik	Uzbek	Turkmen	Hazara	Baloch	Kyrgyz	Nuristani	Other	Refused
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	998

Q37. Which house do you represent?

- 1- Upper House
- 2- Lower House

Q38. Gender (Don't Ask!)

- (1) Male
- (2) Female

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