EU EAT: More in-depth investigations needed after serious allegations on possible fraud

Kabul, 3 July 2014 – The Independent Election Commission (IEC) has detected enough suspicious data in the results of the second round of the Presidential election to conduct a new country-wide audit of 1,930 polling stations. Based on these official IEC figures, EU Election Assessment Team (EU EAT) Chief Observer Thijs Berman assesses that “an additional in-depth audit of the votes is necessary, given these highly worrying indications of potentially wide-spread fraud.”

In the midst of the current electoral deadlock following the second round of the Presidential election, Thijs Berman and his team have met with all major Afghan and international electoral stakeholders, among them the IEC, both candidates and President Karzai. The EU EAT welcomes the decision by the IEC to postpone the announcement of the preliminary results and to conduct an audit on polling stations with exceptionally high turnouts. However, the choice of the IEC to audit only polling stations with 599 votes and over significantly limits the possible detection of fraud.

According to EU EAT Chief Observer Berman, "the audit could reasonably be extended to all polling stations with 595 votes and above, a criterion which could detect possible fraud on a wider scale." The EU EAT estimates that other aspects of the results should be examined, such as highly improbable votes for one single candidate in polling stations, or unlikely discrepancies between female and male votes. Adding all these aspects together and according to IEC figures, the number of problematic polling stations could well exceed 6,000 out of a total of 22,828. Therefore, the EU EAT considers that additional fraud detection measures will be necessary to detect and eliminate potentially fraudulent votes in order to respect the democratic choice of Afghan voters.

“In the interest of Afghan voters, and of the future stability of the country, a credible outcome is essential. I hope that the IEC will be able, in agreement with both candidates, to perform a more in-depth audit. This is technically possible without much delay”, Thijs Berman underlines.

Moreover, the EU EAT expects that the online publication of detailed preliminary results per polling station, to which the IEC has publicly committed itself, will contribute to the transparency, credibility and acceptance of the outcome of this Presidential election.

The EU EAT will remain in Afghanistan until the end of the electoral process and will issue its Final report shortly after.

The European Union Election Assessment Team (EU EAT) has been present in Afghanistan since 15 March 2014. The Mission is led by Chief Observer Thijs Berman, a Dutch member of the European Parliament (2004-2014). The EU EAT is independent in its findings and conclusions and adheres to the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation signed at the United Nations in October 2005.

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