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Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan

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TEFA's concern on obscure and uncoordinated electoral efforts

Kabul: less than one week has passed since the second scrutiny of Kabul's election result sheets. Commencement of this crucial process without any sort of consultation with election related organizations along with lack of authentic data can surely underpin the opportunity for electoral violation. Based on what TEFA has found during its observation from Kabul's result sheets after a recounting process, which was charged with no clear and cutting-edge mechanism, the possibilities of distinguishing between the white and black ballots is quite tight and can result in nothing but underutilization of resources and waste of time. TEFA's election observation shows that a greater number of polling stations were not provided with original result sheets and that IEC's staff on E-Day were occupied in recording candidates' votes either on a blank white sheet or on voters' list; moreover these polling stations also lacked IEC's stamp and signature of IEC's staff, and a large number of result sheets were clear enough to know that they were manipulated and were afterwards stickered at IEC. TEFA is concerned about election commissions' decision on this matter and deems it highly likely that their decision by the end of this process will lessen from their focus on the coming Presidential Election.

On the other hand, IEC in near future will roll out the absentee voter registration process and will also put together the voters list via biometric, but it is noteworthy that the previous elections' (2018 Parliamentary Elections) voters list were characterized by defects and unreliability and thus garnered setbacks and severe mismanagement in the electoral process. Therefore, kicking off the voter registration process based on the information from the previous voter list will not only be useless, but will also be an attempt to repeat the previous mistakes.

In accordance with article 156 of the Afghan constitution, IEC is independent and so all should respect and preserve its independency. All governmental and non-governmental entities are obliged to assist IEC in executing electoral tasks when needed, while making sure they do not mistake such cooperation or assistance with interference in IEC's work and to avoid damaging its independency. The level of cooperation of Central Statistics Department and Administrative Reforms Commission with IEC should be thoroughly clear so that observers could properly observe it. IEC while safeguarding its independency should seek cooperation from both the mentioned entities with respect to how rich these entities are in terms of their working capacity and human capital. TEFA believes that both Central Statistics Department and Administrative Reforms Commission are struck by limitations pertaining to their working capacity and human capital.

With respect to the amended election law, technology is ought to be used in all phases of election as a fully-functioning package; however, taking into consideration the ongoing obscure and vague electoral conditions and TEFA's observation findings, it is impossible for the election commission to use technology in all phases of elections by the date elections are due, and may bring about major electoral challenges.

Therefore, election commissions have the authority to take a decision realistic and technical enough to manifest thoroughly acceptable and transparent elections.

TEFA is concerned about how diligently and technically managed and calculated election budget would be, since on one side we have the international community with no announcement of cooperation be it technical or financial in holding the coming elections, and second, while it seems unlikely, the Afghan government claims to provide the needed budget.

Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan recommends the following:

1. Taking into consideration the actual possibilities and election budget, IEC must clarify how technology can be used and for doing so should come up with a feasibility study plan.
2. IEC should have scrutinized ECC's previous decision and should have developed a practical solution to the problem.
3. We suggest that IEC should content the international community on its decisions and future plans, and should incorporate observation foundations' recommendations in their operations for the betterment of the electoral process.