Boxes containing written challenges against prospective candidates for the 2005 Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections are being transported from provincial centres across Afghanistan to the Electoral Complaints Commission in Kabul for adjudication over the coming three weeks.

A six-day period for filing challenges against any of the 6,068 names on the Preliminary Candidate List closed at 4.00 pm Thursday June 9.

The Electoral Complaints Commission will consider all challenges over the coming three weeks and determine whether any of the 6,068 candidates on the Preliminary Candidate List should be excluded.

A candidate may be excluded if he or she does not meet a range of criteria for eligibility as specified in Article 85 of the Constitution, and Article 15 of the Electoral Law.

Article 15 (3) of the Electoral Law prohibits anyone who commands or belongs to an unofficial military force or armed group from becoming a candidate.

The Joint Secretariat of the Disarmament and Reintegration Commission is reviewing the Preliminary Candidate List to determine whether anyone on the list still commands or belongs to an unofficial military force or armed group.

The Joint Secretariat will inform the ECC of its findings and the ECC will then issue a letter to any prospective candidates identified as still having links to unofficial military forces or armed groups.

The letter will advise them to undertake the disarmament and weapons collection program being supervised by the Joint Secretariat of the Disarmament and Reintegration Commission, which has just launched its new Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups phase.

Any prospective candidate who has not fully disarmed and severed links to unofficial military forces or armed groups by July 1 may be excluded from participation in the September 18 elections.

Lists of candidates who have been provisionally excluded will be displayed at JEMB Provincial Offices between July 2 and 7. Excluded candidates have the chance to respond before July 7. All responses will be considered by the ECC before the Final Candidate List is certified by the JEMB on July 12.

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