PRESS RELEASE
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The JEMB has banned all election campaign advertising on radio, television and in newspapers until the official campaign period starts on August 16, JEMB spokesman Baheen Sultan Ahmad announced today.

Mr. Baheen said that once the campaign period starts, the Media Commission expects to have a system in place that will allow sponsored advertising for all candidates on local radio and television stations.

Details of the sponsored advertising campaign are expected to be announced as soon as details have been finalized with broadcasters and international donors.

At a JEMB meeting the commissioners decided to prohibit advertisements by or on behalf of any candidate or political party relating to the election campaign on radio, television and in newspapers effective immediately.

The ban will continue until the start of the campaign period on August 16, when sponsored advertising messages from candidates will be broadcast daily around the country.

Enabling the thousands of candidates to broadcast their messages to their voters is a complicated task, Mr. Baheen said. However, this is what the Media Commission is intending to do, so that voters are well-informed about the candidates’ views before Election Day.

The ban will ensure that wealthy candidates are not able to obtain an unfair advantage by dominating the mass media.

Media outlets and candidates should note that this prohibition will be enforced both by the Media Commission and the Election Complaints Commission.

The Media Commission is required to investigate and adjudicate complaints against the media where a media outlet is alleged to have violated election rules.

The Election Complaints Commission investigates and adjudicates complaints against candidates, and has specific power to sanction candidates from the list of eligible candidates for election to the Wolesi Jirga or the provincial councils.

Complaints can be lodged with any provincial offices of the JEMB or at its headquarters in Kabul. A Media Commission contact system will be available in the next few days.

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