PRESS RELEASE

BALLOT PAPERS BEGIN ARRIVING ON ONE OF WORLD’S LARGEST AIRCRAFT

July 29, 2005

Plans for Afghanistan’s Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council Elections moved a step closer Friday with the arrival of the first batch of ballot papers from London on an Antonov AN 124 plane.

The Antonov, one of the world’s largest aircraft, touched down at Kabul International Airport just after 7am carrying the first shipment of the millions of ballot papers needed for the nationwide polls on September 18th.

“The arrival of these ballot papers marks an important milestone in our plans to hold the first Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections. It heralds the start of the huge logistical challenge that we face in transporting these ballot papers safely and securely across the whole of Afghanistan,” said Joint Electoral Management Body Chairman Bissmillah Bissmil.

The 40 million ballot papers, weighing over 1,000 tonnes, are being printed in the UK and Austria by the only two printing houses which were capable of printing the required volume in the required timeframe.

They will be transported on to polling stations in time for the elections by air and road, and on to more remote locations on donkeys.

Mr Bissmill added:

“We are confident that our meticulous planning will pay off, ensuring that we are able to deliver these ballot papers to every district of Afghanistan in time for polling day on September 18, so that all Afghans will have their voice heard in deciding the future of our country.”

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