PRESS RELEASE

AFGHANISTAN’S NOMADS TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN LEGISLATORS
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As Afghanistan’s Kuchi (nomad) community undertakes its annual migration to lower grounds ahead of the approaching winter, they will be able to stop at any of 1,616 Kuchi polling stations across the country to cast votes in the September 18 Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of National Assembly) elections.

Ten seats in the 249-seat Wolesi Jirga have been reserved for representatives of the Kuchi community.

In addition, the Kuchi community will be represented in the appointments made by the president to the Meshrano Jirga (Upper House of National Assembly).

The Wolesi Jirga seats are being contested by 68 Kuchi candidates, including seven Kuchi women. Three of the 10 Kuchis seats are reserved for women.

“Our Kuchi community can now look forward to having their special needs represented in our country’s first post-Taliban legislature,” said the Chairman of the Joint Electoral Management Body, Bissmillah Bissmil.

“I encourage all Kuchi voters to seize this chance on September 18 to cast ballots for their own representatives.”

Over 1,600 polling stations will be set up especially for Kuchis, including 912 male polling stations and 704 female polling stations, in all but two of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces. Of the 1,616 Kuchi polling stations, 687 are incorporated in mainstream polling centres.

The largest number of Kuchi polling stations will be in Kabul province with 260, followed by Kandahar with 163. Herat and Helmand provinces will each have 110 Kuchi polling stations.

Around 532,826 Kuchis have registered to vote.

To reach Kuchis in remote areas, 200,000 Kuchi-specific leaflets explaining the 2005 electoral process and 2,000 audio cassettes carrying election radio-dramas and Kuchi-specific public awareness message have been distributed

For more information please contact:
JEMB National Spokesperson Sultan Ahmed Baheen
baheensultana@unops.org.af
mob. + 93 (0) 70 29 89 92

JEMB International Spokesperson: Bronwyn Curran
bronwync@unops.org.af
mob.: + 93 (0) 70 16 44 94

JEMB Media Relations Officer Aleem Siddique
aleems@unops.org.af
mob: + 93 (0) 79 06 96 32