



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: VOTER REGISTRATION

The right to vote is the most basic element of a democratic election system. The right of the individual to vote implies the responsibility of administration to facilitate that right, and this begins with voter registration.

The 2013 voter registration “top-up” exercise has been the first major electoral operation of the new electoral cycle for the 2014 and 2015 elections, focusing primarily on registering newly eligible and first-time voters. Existing voter registration cards, distributed earlier for previous elections remain valid.

Who may register to vote?

According to the Afghan Electoral Law, both men and women have the right to register as voters and cast ballots in elections (Article 5), provided that they:

- Will be 18 years of age or older by Election Day; and
- Are not already registered; or
- Are citizens who have recently returned to Afghanistan from abroad; or
- Have changed their place of residence from one electoral constituency to another; or
- Have lost their voter cards; or
- Whose voter cards have been damaged in a way that has affected the visibility of her or her details; or
- Who have not been able to register in previous voter registration exercises.

When and where can voters register?

Eligible voters may register every week, from Saturday to Wednesday between 8am and 4pm, or on Thursdays between 8am and 1pm at a voter registration center in their respective provinces. Voter registration centers can be found in each of the 34 provincial capitals, as detailed on the IEC website.

When did voter registration begin and when does it end?

The voter registration “top-up” exercise, currently taking place, began on 26 May 2013 and will end two weeks prior to the Presidential and Provincial Council Elections (22 March, 2014). The exercise is being implemented at both provincial and district level.

On 26 May 2013, the IEC successfully commenced the first phase of the top-up voter registration at provincial level. According to its operational plan, the IEC opened at least one voter registration center in every provincial capital with provinces including Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif, and Kunduz having more than one. In total 41 provincial-level voter registration centers were opened, comprising 82 voter registration stations (41 for men and 41 for women). These centers will facilitate on-going registration until two weeks prior to Election Day.

On 27 July 2013, the IEC launched the second phase of the registration, expanding operations from 41 provincial-level voter registration centers to an additional 399 district-level voter registration centers.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: VOTER REGISTRATION

Three hundred and eighty-one (381) were opened on the first day (95%), including many districts that were inaccessible to the IEC in 2010. Within a few weeks, the IEC was able to conduct voter registration operations in almost all district centers. On 17 September, the IEC officially extended the district level campaign for 45 days until 10 November.

What is required of eligible voters, in order to obtain their voter cards?

Eligible voters must present proof of their identity. This requires one of the following documents: *E-Tazkira*; government employee identification; national passport; driver's license; business certificate; student card; health insurance card; *qabala* (property ownership papers); *tarkhis* (proof of military service completion); *tasdiq* (document signed by two government employees, confirming citizenship and identity); marriage certificate; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Afghan Return Form; Afghan residence card (from Pakistan or Iran); existing voter registration card (for those wishing to replace damaged cards); or confirmation paper from *wahil* (head of *guzar*) or *malik* (head of village), certifying that the applicant is an Afghan citizen and indicating name, father's name, grandfather's name, date of birth and current address.

Can registered voters (who still possess their cards) register again and obtain a second voter card?

Voters who are already registered and who still possess their cards do not need to register again; and numerous measures have been put into place, to ensure that each voter votes only one time.

Voters should also be aware that it is a violation of law and an act of fraudulence to buy or sell a voter card (Electoral Law, Article 68). Buying and selling voter cards undermines the electoral process and contravenes the law. It is the responsibility of all Afghan citizens to refrain from, and to discourage others from, buying or selling voter cards.

What provisions are made to facilitate the registration of women and other voters with special needs?

According to the Afghan Electoral Law, every voter has the right to support the candidate of their choice by registering to vote in elections. Imposing any type of restriction on eligible voters is prohibited.

In order to facilitate the rights of women to participate in elections, all voter registration centers are required to provide separate stations for men and women. Female voters are facilitated by female voter registration staff and are not required to display photos on their voter cards.

Eligible nomads (*kuchis*) may register at any Voter Registration Center.

Why do some voter cards look different from others?

Voter registration exercises have been conducted in preparation for elections held in 2004 and 2005, 2009 and 2010; and are now being held in preparation for elections to be held in 2014 and 2015. The technical features of voter cards are continuously being improved. For example, newer cards include a registered 3D hologram, UV markings and other non-visible features, to further mitigate fraudulent use.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: VOTER REGISTRATION

In order to facilitate the broadest possible participation and in accord with the 2013 Regulation on Voter Registration, all eligible voters who possess a voter card are able to vote in elections. In the future, voters will also be able to use an electronic national identification (*e-Tazkira*), to identify themselves and to cast ballots on Election Day.

Those who do not produce current or previously issued voter cards as forms of voter identification will not be allowed to vote on Election Day; and additional operational measures have been put into place, to reduce and address potential misuse of voter cards. These include inking of voters fingers with indelible ink (and invisible UV ink as a pilot), and punching of voter cards with a small, distinctively-shaped hole.