



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 9, 2009

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**NDI EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT  
AFGHANISTAN ELECTION FRAUD COMPLAINTS**

WASHINGTON, DC – The National Democratic Institute (NDI) today expressed deep concern over the high levels of fraud complaints filed with Afghan election authorities.

“The credibility of Afghanistan’s elections now depends largely on the thorough investigation of these complaints by the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC),” the Institute said in a statement. “Unless the ‘clear and convincing evidence of fraud’ found by the ECC is addressed, it will be impossible to determine the will of the Afghan people.”

NDI said that it will continue to observe the counting and complaint processes. “The electoral process has not been completed and it is essential that the international community continues to observe every stage,” it said.

NDI conducted an international election observation mission in the country for the Aug. 20 presidential and provincial council elections. The Institute mobilized more than 100 international and Afghan observers, covering 19 of the country’s 34 provinces, to observe every aspect of the election process, including the campaign, balloting on election day and the post-election period. The group came from 11 countries on six continents and included current and former government officials, political party and election officials, legislative staff, representatives of democracy and human rights organizations, and academics.

The Institute also noted that it is not just the presidential election outcome that is at stake. “The concerns extend to the 34 elections for provincial councils, the governmental bodies that are closest to the people. Their legitimacy is also critical to the credibility of Afghanistan’s governing institutions,” it said.

One of the serious problems identified was unusually high turnout figures. An NDI analysis of election results found grounds for concern in a number of provinces, including Nuristan, Paktia, Helmand and Bahdgis, where large numbers of polling stations reported more than 600 votes each, which is 100 percent of the estimated votes for these stations.

These provinces are among the country's least secure. Similar anomalies and other irregularities have been uncovered by journalists, local monitors and international observers.

The ECC has received a total of 2,842 complaints, of which 726 were assessed as serious or "priority A." Declaring that it had found clear evidence of fraud in a number of polling stations, the ECC on Sept. 8 ordered Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission (IEC) to conduct an audit and recount of polling stations nationwide that had vote totals equal to or greater than 600, or that had returns with any presidential candidate receiving 95 percent or more of the total valid votes cast, provided that more than 100 votes had been cast at the station. As of Sept. 8, the IEC had tallied 91.6 percent of the total vote. It expects to complete the tallying process before initiating a recount.

"Afghans must be confident that the results of the elections reflect the will of the people," NDI said. "This is essential for the credibility of any government that emerges from the polls."

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