



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: 100% AUDIT OF 2014 RUN-OFF ELECTION RESULTS

Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission (IEC) is currently conducting an extensive audit of all ballots cast in the 2014 Presidential Election run-off, at its Kabul headquarters. Every ballot cast (8,109,493) on run-off Election Day (14 June) will be subject to audit.

What exactly is an audit and why is it necessary?

An audit is the process of reviewing election materials (namely, results forms, ballots and boxes) to improve the correctness and accuracy of election results. This large-scale, in-depth audit currently taking place, will better position the IEC to:

- Distinguish valid from invalid votes;
- Produce results that more accurately reflect the will of Afghan voters, as expressed on their ballots; and
- Determine legitimate national leadership.

How is this audit different than the other audits that have already been conducted?

As in previous cases, the audit is consistent with the Afghan Constitution, all national laws and customs and in accord with all relevant procedures; but unlike audits conducted in the past:

- Every ballot cast will be subject – even if it has already been audited in past exercises;
- In addition to the support of the international community, both Presidential Candidates have publicly expressed their support for the audit.
- Criteria for determining the validity of votes will include those already in place, as well as an additional 5 criteria recommended by the United Nations (UN), and agreed upon by both candidates.
- IEC audit teams will be observed by national and international observers, as well as agents of both candidates; and United Nations staff will be present.

Because of its scale and depth, because it has the support of both candidates, and because it is being held according to international best practices, this audit is seen as a way to build national confidence in the institution of democracy and the value of peaceful elections.

What measures are being taken to protect election materials from tampering during transport?

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) provide security as election materials are delivered to the IEC by road. Materials requiring air transport are delivered on ISAF and UN flights.

Regardless whether materials are transported by road or by air, IEC staff retains custody of the materials at all times; and each and every convoy and aircraft is accompanied by one agent of each candidate and one IEC custodian.

Who conducts the audit?

Audit teams will comprise staff from IEC provincial offices and headquarters. All audit team members have received training in the application of the relevant audit procedures and checklist – including international criteria, recommended by the United Nations and agreed to by both candidates.

How do audit teams determine whether results are valid or invalid?

All audit teams consider the same, standardized questions, to assess the validity of results. These questions are detailed in a checklist, used by every audit team; and the answers are officially documented and forwarded to IEC Commissioners for review and final decisions. Questions appearing on the checklist are as follow:

1. Is the ballot box of the same type as distributed by the Commission for THE present election?
2. Is the ballot box intact? If no, explain.
3. Is there a sticker on the ballot box, indicating code of the polling center and station?
4. How many seals does the ballot box lid have and how many of them are intact?
5. Can the seals of the ballot box be opened with the force of hand?
6. Are the serial numbers of the seals similar as given on the seal Serial Number Recording Form inside the ballot box?
7. Is the results form copy available inside the ballot box?
8. Are there any unused, spoiled and invalid ballot papers inside the box? If yes, how many ballot papers?
9. Are there any marked ballot papers inside the ballot box which are not detached from the stub? If yes, how many ballot papers and in favor of which candidates are they marked?
10. Does the back side of the ballot papers related to a candidate bear a verification stamp? If no, how many ballot papers lack verification stamp and in favor of which candidate have they been used?
11. Have the ballot papers been marked according to the procedure? If no, how many ballot papers for which candidate?
12. Is there any identical or significant pattern of the same marking on ballots? If yes, how many?
13. Is there evidence of tampering with the results sheet and coherence with the number of ballots in the box? If yes, provide details.
14. Does the results sheet copy match that processed in the National Tally Center?
15. What is the relevant information from the polling station journal and list of voters?
16. Do ballot boxes registered results that, according to best international practices, require special scrutiny (ie. when there are significant differences between first and second round tallies). If yes, then such ballot boxes will receive particular attention from international and domestic observers and agents.

The form also provides space in which any additional explanations may be provided, if necessary.

What measures are in place to ensure the accountability of audit teams?

Audit teams are directly and consistently observed by agents of both candidates; Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) staff; and national and international observers.

After completing the audit, audited ballot boxes must be closed and sealed, and seal numbers recorded on the completed audit checklist form. The form must then be signed by the audit team supervisor, one of each of the candidate's agents, a representative of the IECC. (Wherever possible, it should be signed

by any observers present. However, this is not required.) Those who sign the form are effectively confirming that the audit has been conducted according to procedure and that the signatory supports the outcome.

If they are concerned by perceived irregularities or questionable actions, agents and/or may ask auditors to provide clarification or explain their actions.

They may also approach any UN staff member. Familiar with international best-practices and audit criteria, UN staff is present in every building in which audits are being conducted.

Candidates or their agents should bring any audit-related complaints to the IECC, within 24 hours of having occurred. The IECC is responsible to respond to those complaints within 48 hours of receipt.

What measures are being taken to protect election materials while in storage at the IEC?

ANSF has formed a concentric ring of defenses around the IEC HQ to deter and deny unauthorized or forced entry. IEC Security controls access to the audit locations and warehouses where ballots are stored. Access is only authorized to individuals possessing a valid IEC accreditation badge or valid IEC photo identification.

At the end of the day, audit locations and warehouses storing ballots are cleared, secured and sealed by a joint team consisting of IEC Security, IEC Audit Manager and candidate agents (in the presence of observers). Seal numbers are recorded and verified jointly by IEC Security, the IEC Audit Manager and Candidate Agents (in the presence of observers). ISAF monitors the security of the Warehouses from 5:30pm until 6:30am and also during Eid, until the audit is complete. Audit locations and warehouses are opened and unsealed by a joint team of IEC Security, the IEC Audit Manager and candidate agents (in the presence of observers). Elements of the Kabul Fire Brigade are stationed at headquarters, 24 hours per day and 7 days per week, to respond immediately in the case of fire.

What happens after an audit is conducted?

Based on audit findings, IEC Commissioners will decide whether votes should be invalidated, partially invalidated or recounted. According to the Law on Structure, Duties and Authorities of the IEC and the IECC (Article 12), these audit decisions are to be made in meetings, open to agents, observers and media. Decisions will also be accessible to the public, and may be viewed on the IEC website.

According to the Afghan Electoral Law, either candidate or any of their agents may lodge an official complaint within 24 hours of an audit publication; and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission is required to address that complaint within 48 hours of receipt.

How will the audit affect election results?

Only ballots confirmed as valid will be included in the final tally of Presidential Election results. This could mean that final figures are different than those previously announced. It will also ensure that final figures are more accurate and reflect the choices expressed by Afghan voters.

How long will the audit take?

Audits will be conducted simultaneously by multiple audit teams, working in two shifts from 7am to 12pm, and 1pm – 6pm, daily (with the exception of the Eid holiday). Due to the complexity of the process and the need to ensure accuracy, the audit is anticipated to take three to four weeks.

When will final election results be announced?

The IEC is committed to producing results that most accurately reflect the will of Afghan voters, as reflected on their ballots. Final results may only be certified and announced once the 100% audit is complete; and after the IEC has been advised by the IECC with regard to complaints adjudication.