



Independent Election Commission
Audit and Recount Procedure
2014 Presidential Run-off Elections

INTRODUCTION

The Independent Election Commission (IEC or “Commission”) held the second round of the presidential election on 14 June 2014, following the first round on 5 April 2014. Based on the IEC Decision 20-1393, the IEC initially audited 299 polling stations. Following concerns expressed by stakeholders about the possible level of fraud in the run-off election, the IEC conducted an additional audit of 1,930 polling stations in 30 provinces based on the criteria: those polling stations where the total votes were 599 or more. The preliminary results announced on 7 July reflected these audits.

On 12 July, both candidates agreed to a Technical Framework for the conduct of credible and comprehensive audit of 100 percent of all polling stations which equates to 22,828 polling stations and 8,109,493 ballots. The audit will be conducted at the IEC Headquarters in Kabul in the presence of candidate agents, Media, national and international observers, UN advisors, as well as representatives of the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC).

This procedure is developed to guide the staff involved in the audit process of these ballot boxes.

AUDIT

Audits performed by the Independent Election Commission are audits to evaluate the process and procedures used during the polling and counting. Audits are a means of examining documents, reports, forms and ballot boxes to determine if the procedures and processes have been correctly applied and followed and if there is any evidence of errors, malpractice, fraud or tampering with the ballot boxes and forms associated with the polling and counting.

Audit Center

The Commission in Kabul will assign its warehouses as audit centers.

The boxes containing the ballot papers will be arranged in the warehouses based on the provinces, districts and polling centers (where possible); adequate work space will be allocated for each audit team to perform their assigned tasks.

To facilitate the proper observation, a specific area will be allocated for candidate’s agents, observers and media.

Audit Timings

The assigned staff will be divided into two shifts: the first from 07:00 to 13:00, and the second from 14:00 to 20:00 hours.

Persons who are allowed in the Audit Center

- Staff authorized by the Independent Election Commission; representatives of the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission; agents, national and international observers, political parties, UN, and media accredited by the Independent Election Commission can be present at the audit and recount site and can observe the process.

Code of Conduct

- Agents, observers and other accredited can attend all steps of the process including Commission's open sessions provided that they do not disrupt the operations.
- At every step of the audit process, agents and observers may seek clarifications.
- All accredited media organizations may attend all steps of the audit/recount processes and bring all necessary equipment including cameras.
- In accordance with the media code of conduct, media organizations who have obtained accreditation letters can be present during all steps of the audit/recount processes. Media can also bring necessary equipment as cameras and video cameras to the audit and recount site.
- All accredited agents, national and international observers and media, shall:
 - Ensure visible display of their accreditation badges.
 - Comply with the Election law, all other relevant laws, procedures and official decisions of the Commission.
 - Act in accordance with the relevant code of conduct and regulations.
 - Raise concerns in accordance to the relevant procedures.
 - Refrain from prejudgments or disseminating rumors.
 - Refrain from using divisive/discriminatory language and inflammatory statements which could incite violence on grounds of race, ethnicity, regional, sex or religion.

Audit Staff

Audit Operations Management Team:

- This team will be comprised of the 3 senior staff members of the Commission as well as Senior UN Electoral Official, who will have the overall responsibility of the audit process. This team will be headed by the Deputy CEO for Operations.
- The team will be responsible for assuring that the audit process runs smoothly, assuring enough support to all staff involved.

Audit Center Coordinators:

- For each of the audit centers where the ballot boxes of the different provinces are being audited, two IEC senior members will be responsible for the audit process; in addition these teams will be responsible for receiving the audit forms from the supervisors and submitting them to the official responsible at the tally center intake department.

Audit Storage Coordinator:

Under the supervision of the Audit Center Coordinator the audit storage coordinator is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all ballot boxes are properly stored, located and distributed to the audit teams.

Audit Supervisor:

Under the supervision of the Audit Center Coordinators, the Audit Supervisor is responsible for oversight of 5 or 10 audit teams. The responsibilities are as follows:

- Arrange and manage the working area of the teams.

- Prepare all the required materials for respective teams.
- Ensure that all staff performs tasks according to the relevant procedures.
- Ensure the full attendance of the staff.
- Manage the presence of the agents, observers and media in the vicinity of the workstations.
- Explain the audit procedure of the relevant team to candidate agents and observers.
- Ensure that audit takes place according to the procedures.
- Ensure that recount takes place according to the procedures.
- Submits the completed checklist to the Audit Center Coordinators.
- Assist the team in carrying out their responsibilities and reports matters to the Audit Center Supervisory Team when necessary.

Audit Team

Each audit team consists of two members:

- Audit Team Leader
- Assistant

Audit Team Leader:

- Is responsible for supervising the audit and recount performed by the team,
- Ensures that the audits and recounts are implemented according to the procedures,
- Reads aloud the check list steps,
- Completes the check list form,
- Presents the form to agent and observers for signing and hands over the form to the Audit Center Supervisor.

Assistant:

- Opens the ballot box and reseals it as directed by the Team Leader.
- Performs the checklist steps as directed by the team leader.

List of Materials

- Ballot Box Contents
 - Plastic Seals
 - Ballots: Used, unused,
 - Record of Seals Form
 - Polling Station Journal
 - Envelope of spoiled ballots
 - Copy of results sheet
- Tally Center Documents
 - Results Sheet Copy
 - List of Voters
- Audit Team Materials
 - Checklists
 - Plastic Seals
 - Stationery

Opening and Closing of the Audit Center

- Following the completion of the set-up of the Audit Center, the audit operations should begin.
- At the end of operations every day, the Audit Center Coordinator locks the audit center using metal seals, in the presence of agents, observers, UN advisor, recording the seal numbers in the journal and then requesting agents and observers to sign the journal.
- The next day, the team reconciles in presence of agents and observers the seal numbers with the numbers recorded in the journal and open the audit center.

Audit Steps

Prior commencing the audit

Audit Center Coordinator

- Ensures presence of the teams.
- Ensures that ballot boxes are ready contacting the Audit Storage Coordinator.

Audit Storage Coordinator

- Manages the ballot boxes to be audited, identifying them in a timely manner.

Team Supervisor

- Ensures that the teams have sufficient number of audit checklists, results forms, lists of voters and other materials,
- Explains to the agents, national and international observers, political parties and candidate representatives, the code of conduct, at the beginning of the audit process or upon request, if required,
- Identifies the ballot box to be audited for the audit teams.

Audit Team Leader

- Ensures that all forms, reports and other materials are available.
- Ensures that the checklist is completely and correctly filled out.

During the audit process

Audit Supervisor

- Oversees the work of the audit teams during that shift.
- Ensures quality control during the audit process.

Audit Team Leader

- Reads aloud the checklist questions.
- Request the Assistant to perform every step of the checklist, showing every step carefully to the agents, observers and media.
- Completes the check list at the end of every step.
- Identifies 4 plastic seals to be used for resealing.
- Reads aloud the serial numbers and displays the serial number to agents, observers and media present.
- Records the seal numbers on the check list.
- Asks the Team Supervisor to review the check list.

- Requests agents, observers to sign the checklist.
- Responds to questions/comments from observers and agents.
- Record UN Comments and advice (if any) on the check list.
- Makes 3 copies of the completed check list form.
- Staples the audit check list together with a copy of the NTC results form.
- Places all the materials back into the ballot box.
- Places a copy of the checklist inside the ballot box.
- Directs the Assistant to seal the ballot box.

Assistant

- Follows the instructions of the Team Leader.
- Ensures that all the steps of the check list are demonstrated in an adequate manner to the agent, observers and media:
 - (1) Is the ballot box of the same type as distributed by the Commission for the present election? Yes/No

Examine the ballot box to determine its authenticity.

- (2) Is the ballot box intact? Yes/No.

Examine the box; is the box damaged to the extent that a hand could be placed inside the box? If yes, immediately begin a recount.

Any physical signs of tampering with the box shall be recorded in the relevant section of the checklist.

- (3) Is there a sticker on the ballot box, indicating code of the polling center and station? Yes/No

Examine the ballot box for the existence of the sticker.

- (4) How many seals does the ballot box lid have and how many of them are intact? It has () locks and () out of them are intact.

Count the seals and examine their condition.

Instances to be verified in regard to seals: if seals are not green but of a different color, if their size is different from those distributed by the Commission, or if they lack seal number. In this case record the information on the check list.

Record on the check list if two or more seals are broken or show obvious signs of tampering, or seals are sufficiently loose that a hand could be placed inside the box. In either case, immediately begin a recount.

- (5) Can the seals of the ballot box be opened with the force of hand? Yes No

Attempt to remove the seals by twisting the seal with the hand.

- (6) Are the serial numbers of the seals similar as given on the seals Serial Number Recording Form inside the ballot box? Yes/No

After opening the box, compare the ballot box seal numbers to the record of seals form from the ballot box.

If the serial numbers of two or more of the ballot box seals on the side of the box do not match with the serial numbers recorded on the record of seals form in the ballot box, immediately begin a recount.

- (7) Is the Result's Form Copy available inside the ballot box? Yes/No

Locate the results sheet copy in the box. If there is no results sheet immediately begin a recount.

If the total number of recorded ballot (valid, invalid, spoiled, blank) exceeds 600, immediately begin a recount.

- (8) Are there any unused, spoiled and invalid ballot papers inside the box? Yes/No. If Yes, how many ballot papers?

Count the used, spoiled and invalid ballot papers in the box.

*Are there any ballots from a different polling station within that center?
If yes, separate them and immediately begin a recount for each station.*

*Are there any ballots from a different polling center?
If yes, separate them during the recount, place the ballots from the different polling center in the invalid bundle.*

- (9) Are there any marked ballot papers inside the ballot box which are not detached from the stub? Yes/No

If there are 20 or more ballot papers not detached from the stub, count the number of marked ballot papers which are not detached from the stub. Immediately begin a recount. During the recount, ballot papers not detached from the stub will be allocated to the invalid bundle.

- (10) Does the back side of the ballot papers related to a candidate bear a verification stamp? Yes/No

To verify that possibly there are ballot papers without a verification stamp, randomly select at most 4 bundles valid ballots from box, including to the extent possible, 2 bundles from both candidates. Open each of these bundles to determine if there are ballot papers without a verification stamp.

1. *If there are less than 20 ballots without a verification stamp then no recount is required.*
2. *If there are 20 or more ballot papers without a verification stamp, open and examine all remaining bundles. Count the total number of ballot papers without a verification stamp per candidate and record it on the check list. Immediately begin a recount. During the recount ballot papers without a verification stamp will be allocated to the invalid bundle.*

(11) Have the ballot papers been marked according to the procedure? Yes/No

To verify that possibly there may be ballot papers not marked according to procedure, randomly select at most 4 bundles of valid ballots from the box, including to the extent possible, 2 bundles from both candidates. Open each of these bundles to determine if ballot papers are not marked according to procedure.

1. *If there are less than 20 ballots not marked according to procedure then no recount is required.*
2. *If there are 20 or more ballot papers not marked according to procedure, open and examine all remaining bundles. Count the total number of ballot papers not marked according to procedure per candidate and record it on the check list. Immediately begin a recount. During the recount ballot papers not marked according to procedure will be allocated to the invalid bundle.*

○ (12) Are there identical or significant patterns of the same markings on ballots? Yes

To verify that possibly there are identical or significant patterns of same markings on the ballot papers, randomly select at most 4 bundles of valid ballots from box, including to the extent possible, 2 bundles from both candidates. Open each of these bundles to determine if there are identical or significant patterns of same markings on the ballot papers.

1. *If there are less than 20 ballots papers with identical or significant patterns of same markings then no recount is required.*
2. *If there are 20 or more ballots papers with identical or significant patterns of same markings, open and examine all remaining bundles. Count the total number of ballot papers with identical or significant patterns of same markings per candidate and record it on the checklist. Immediately begin a recount. **During the recount, 15% of all ballot papers with identical or significant patterns of same markings per candidate will be included in the valid vote count, according the following formula: $(\text{Total number of similarly marked ballots for a candidate}) \times 15\%$, and then rounded up to the nearest whole number.** All other ballot papers with identical or significant patterns of same markings will be allocated to the invalid bundle.*

○ (13) Is there evidence of tampering with the results sheet and coherence with the number of ballots in the box? If yes, provide details.

Examine the result sheet for evidence of tampering. If there is evidence of tampering with the result sheet, immediately begin a recount.

If there is evidence of tampering with the ballot bundles, record the details on the checklist.

Compare the number of ballots per candidate (by counting the bundles) to the results sheet totals. If there is a discrepancy, immediately begin a recount.

- (14) Does the results sheet copy match that processed in the national tally center?

Compare the result sheet copy totals to the original result sheet totals. If there is an obvious discrepancy, immediately begin a recount. Record all three result totals on the checklist and attach all three copies of the result sheets to the checklist.

- (15) Relevant information of the polling station journal and list of voters.

Is there a list of voters?

If no, immediately begin a recount.

If yes do the following:

Examine the list of voters for the following information:

- *The number of voters who turned out to cast their vote*
- *Sequential voter ID numbers*
- *The correct center and station code*
- *Any other relevant information*

If there are no voters recorded on the list of voters, immediately begin a recount

If there are 10 or more voter ID card numbers logged sequentially on the list of voters, record them on the check list and immediately begin a recount

*Compare the number of voters on the results sheet to the number of voters recorded on the list of voters **and** if there is a 50% discrepancy, immediately begin a recount.*

Examine the polling station journal for the following information:

- *Reports of exertion of force, occurrence of a fight and loss of control of the electoral materials from electoral staff*
- *Any unusual situations regarding the polling station opening and closing;*
- *The intervention of influential persons in the process;*
- *Reasons for results of the votes being recorded on blank ballots or other type of papers*

Compare any voter turnout information in the journal or list of voters with either the result sheet or with the number of ballots in the box. Record all details in the remarks space provided. In case of discrepancy, immediately begin a recount.

- (16) Do ballot boxes register results that, according to best international practices, require special scrutiny (e.g., 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.

Candidate agents and observers may have identified specific ballot boxes that, from their perspective, warrant even more robust attention in the conduct of the audits. Audit teams are therefore requested to take extreme care to ensure that any requests for information are satisfactorily addressed.

IEC stands ready to provide information required by observers and agents. This includes the IEC results data published from the first round and preliminary results from the second round on the IEC website and available in hard copy at the audit centers.

- Seals the ballot box, as instructed.

After the audit process

Audit Supervisor

- Receives the checklist form with the relevant stapled/attached documents such as the (copy of the results form, the list of voters) from the Team Leader and places them in the relevant folder.
- At the end of the shift, the Team Supervisor hands over all completed checklist forms to the Audit Center Coordinator.
- Places appropriately the envelope with the list of voters into the shelf for the return to the NTC at the end of the audit process.
- Handovers all the audit check forms to the official designated of the Legal Department.

Team Leader

- Hands over a copy of the checklist to agents.
- Directs the assistant to tape the box with blue tape.
- Directs the assistant to ensure the ballot box is returned.
- Returns the voters list to the Team Supervisor together with the check list.
- Repeats the same steps until the end of the shift.

Assistant

- Tapes the box audited with blue color scotch tape.

RECOUNT

Recounts are the actual process of recounting all the ballot papers in a particular ballot box, polling station, polling center, province or country. Recounts are performed to ensure that the original results are accurate and correct and if errors are discovered the result of the recount will replace the original results provided.

- The audit team becomes the recount team, and carries out the assigned recount in the same premises as for the audit process. The same times and opening/closing procedure are relevant.
- The counting of votes takes place in accordance with the counting procedure used in the second round of the elections, with the exception that ballots identified as similarly marked will be handled in accordance with Question 12 above.
- Copies of the recount are provided to each candidate agent and a copy is placed inside the box.

After the Recount

- Tape the box recounted with green scotch tape.

Dispute Resolution Mechanism

- Following the assessment of the audit team, if one or both of the candidate agents do not agree, the two agents would then discuss the issue. If there is no agreement, then the issue would be referred to their respective team leaders for discussion. If the team leaders do not agree, then the respective supervisors would then discuss the issue. Finally, if no agreement is reached between the supervisors, the UN advisor would give his or her recommendation which would be considered the final opinion and recorded on the checklist. (No longer than 20 minutes will be allowed for a dispute to reach this stage.) This would dispose of the issue and the audit team would immediately proceed with their work.

ANNEXES

- ✓ Audit checklist
- ✓ Recount procedure
- ✓ Recount results form
- ✓ List of employees
- ✓ List of materials