MEDIA CENTRE GUIDE

***Wolesi Jirga* and
Provincial Council Elections
Afghanistan 2005**

Joint Electoral Management Body

Contents

Introduction

I am pleased to welcome you to the JEMB Media Centre (MC) for the 2005 *Wolesi Jirga* and Provincial Council Elections in Afghanistan. The MC will be the major focal point for the release of election results and information on the election. The MC will also be the venue for Joint Electoral Management Body press conferences and announcements.

The MC has been designed to provide the media and other users with a range of services and facilities to assist them to not only be well informed about the election but also to have a place where the media, in particular, will be able to work and report on the election.

Apart from the information contained in this guide, Media Relations staff from the Joint Electoral Management Body Secretariat will be available to assist visitors with information and other requests for access and assistance. Information technology and audio-visual staff will also be available to assist you.

This election is an historic occasion for Afghanistan, and the MC will do its part in supporting you to bring information on the election to both the people of Afghanistan and the world.

Bismillah Bissmil
Chairman
Joint Electoral Management Body

Part 1: The Media Centre

Role

The JEMB Media Centre (MC) is a dedicated facility for the media and will be able to provide updated information and support to the media to assist their coverage of the 2005 *Wolesi Jirga* and Provincial Council Elections. The centre also has a role in providing information to a range of other stakeholder groups.

Facilities available to journalists include:

- Regular press conferences and/or announcements by the Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB)

- On-site JEMB Media Relations team to provide information and assistance

- Access to the latest election results and information via 34 PCs and an additional 30 ports for use with journalists' own equipment

- Screening of election results and election footage on three large screens

- Internet access, including the election web site

- Work areas and tables

- A dedicated raised TV network area for cameras and associated equipment

- Multi-purpose interview and broadcast/media work rooms

Accredited visitors will be welcome to utilise the centre facilities at any time the JEMB Media Centre is in operation.

Journalists in the MC will be able to interview and seek comment from the full range of visitors to the media centre should those visitors agree to this.

The MC will be used neither as a venue for non-election announcements and media conferences nor by observers or other guests to hold conferences and make announcements. This does not preclude observers from giving media interviews and providing information to the media at the centre.

Hours of operation

The standard opening hours for the MC will be from 8.00 am to 10.00 pm. Around Election Day, the MC will be open on a 24-hour basis, but with minimal staffing from 10.00 pm to 8.00 am.

Services and facilities

Media Centre visitors are invited to make full use of the services and facilities available within it. These services and facilities include access to election results and the internet via PCs provided for general use and ports for other computer equipment (for example, journalists' own laptops).

Apart from tables and chairs with PCs located inside the main auditorium, two media work rooms have been established outside the auditorium. These work areas are fully cabled to allow for computer access.

Printers and photocopiers are available for media use. Please note that reasonable limits will be placed on photocopying.

There will be a catering facility available; the type of catering may vary according to the time of day or night. This catering facility is located in a separate area outside of the main building and work areas. It should be noted that catering is not provided free of charge.

No alcoholic drinks will be allowed in the MC or the election compound.

Assistance to MC users

A Media Relations area has been established, and Media Relations staff, both national and international, will be available to provide assistance and respond to requests for information.

Information technology support staff and audio-visual support staff will also be available to assist you with any problems you may have.

Also located in the MC will be a UNAMA spokesperson's desk on Election Day, and Public Information Officers from ISAF and the Coalition will be present.

Part 2: Accreditation, Security and Evacuation procedures

Accreditation

Media Centre passes or a Media Accreditation badge will be required to gain entry. Please visit the following web site for accreditation information:

www.jemb.org/eng/acc_media.html

It is suggested that those seeking accreditation obtain their MC ID cards prior to Election Day.

Security

It should be appreciated that a high level of security will apply within the MC, and all users will have to comply with security procedures. This is non-negotiable and a condition of entry.

The MC is a weapon-free zone: for the safety of all users, no weapons will be allowed inside the centre, barring exceptional circumstances.

The following security procedures will apply:

- No journalist or guest will be admitted to the MC without correct accreditation being issued before arrival.

- Please allow at least 30 minutes for security check-in procedures, particularly at peak times when press conferences are being held.

- Your accreditation badge will only be valid if presented along with another suitable photographic ID, e.g. a passport, driver's license, or press card. Be prepared to show other forms of identification when requested by security personnel.

- Do not bring any sharp items (e.g. pen knives or scissors) or hazardous gasses or liquids.

A secure parking area will be established close to the centre. There will be limited parking next to the centre for Outside Broadcast vehicles. Television networks will be contacted in respect to OB vehicle requirements.

Evacuation procedures

In the event of a need to evacuate the MC, staff will provide guidance to visitors as to assembly points and egress routes. Maps will be placed in various locations throughout the MC showing assembly points in the event of an evacuation.

Part 3: Election Results

Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) system for the *Wolesi Jirga* and Provincial Council Elections

- The Single Non-Transferable Vote system (SNTV) is the chosen electoral system in Afghanistan for the 2005 *Wolesi Jirga* and Provincial Council elections.

- Candidates stand for elections as individuals and not as part of a party list. Votes are counted for the individual candidates and not according to party affiliation.

- Candidates stand for election in multi-member constituencies. This means that more than one person represents each constituency.

- Candidates who win the most votes fill the available seats for each constituency.

- Even though there will be more than one elected representative from each constituency, each eligible voter casts a single vote on each ballot for his or her preferred candidate.

How does SNTV work in Afghanistan?

- Each voter casts *one vote only* for his or her preferred candidate, no matter how many seats are allocated to that province. As decided by the JEMB, each constituency has more than one seat allocated to it in the *Wolesi Jirga* and its Provincial Council. For example, 33 seats are reserved for Kabul, Afghanistan's most populous province, in the *Wolesi Jirga* and 29 seats in its Provincial Council.

- The candidates with the most votes in each *Wolesi Jirga* and Provincial Council election win the available seats in each assembly.

- Each province also has a number of *Wolesi Jirga* and Provincial Council seats reserved for elected female candidates. Kabul, for example, has nine seats reserved for women in the *Wolesi Jirga* and nine seats reserved for women in the Provincial Council.

- In general, the candidates who receive the most votes win seats. If, however, female candidates do not win at least the number of seats reserved by law, the women with the most votes will be allocated seats, as stipulated in the Constitution and the Electoral Law.

- There is no upper limit on how many female candidates can be elected in each constituency.

Counting and reporting the results

The counting process begins on 20 September and is planned to conclude in early October, before the start of Ramadan. The count includes many important steps to ensure not only an accurate count, but also that the secrecy of the vote for both individuals and communities is protected. Observers and agents will have the ability to follow, witness and assess the entire counting process from polling station to final results, including the secure storage of ballots. This increases accountability and transparency for the entire electoral process.

Transport of ballots to the count centres

At the conclusion of polling, polling centre managers will ensure that all materials are packed in accordance with the JEMBS procedures and are escorted under full observation to the relevant provincial count centre. Count centres for each province are located in each provincial capital with the exception of Nuristan and Kunar: ballots from these two provinces will be counted in Jalalabad, due to operational necessity.

Intake and storage

Upon arrival at count centres, the polling station materials will be checked to ensure that all materials have arrived in good condition; they will then be securely stored by the intake and storage teams. If

ballot boxes appear to be missing, all boxes from that polling station will be put in quarantine in a dedicated storage area, to await investigation.

Reconciliation

Polling stations will be batched together before they are brought to the counting area. Each batch consists of between two and eight different polling stations from at least two different districts. Polling stations in the batches will be mixed during counting in order to protect the secrecy of the vote of both individuals and the community to which they belong.

The count unit will then "reconcile" the ballots for each polling station in the batch separately, starting with the *Wolesi Jirga* ballots. Ballots for each station will be unfolded and counted face down, to ensure the secrecy of the vote, and will be placed in bundles of 50. The total number of ballots received from each station will be counted and compared to the number of ballots recorded on the polling return form. After Provincial Council ballots have been reconciled and there is no discrepancy between the numbers, or if the discrepancy is below the tolerance level set by the JEMB, the ballots will be considered ready for mixing. Otherwise, all boxes from that polling station will be set aside in the dedicated storage area, to await auditing. The reconciliation process is then repeated for the next polling station until all polling stations have been reconciled.

Mixing

Once all the ballots for the polling stations in the batch have been reconciled, the mixing process will begin. *Wolesi Jirga* ballots will be mixed and counted first. The bundles of 50 will be taken randomly from the ballot boxes from stations from more than one district within a province and placed on a table, where they will be mixed. Bundles of ballots will then be returned to boxes in a random fashion. This further secures the secrecy of the vote, as the origin of the vote cast cannot be determined. This means that not only is the individual's vote secret, but so is that of the community that voted at a particular polling station, centre or district.

Counting

Once ballots from each batch have been reconciled and mixed, they will be counted individually. Ballots will be turned over and votes will be viewed for the first time. Due to the large number of candidates on each ballot, ballots will first be sorted by columns. For example, all ballots with votes cast for candidates in the left column of the ballot page will be initially sorted together.

Ballots from the first column will then be sorted per candidate, and votes for each candidate will be counted twice by two different counters. The results will then be recorded, candidate by candidate, on a results sheet by the count unit team supervisor. The process will be repeated for each column of the ballot. Once all *Wolesi Jirga* ballots have been counted, the whole process of mixing and counting is repeated for Provincial Council ballots.

Data entry of the results

The polling station return forms and the batch results forms will be scanned in the count centre and the data will be transmitted by a secure server to the Kabul data centre, where the results will be compiled.

Additional count information on Kuchis

The *Wolesi Jirga* and Provincial Council ballots in a batch are counted immediately after each other. Kuchi *Wolesi Jirga* ballots will be counted in the province in which they were cast except in cases where fewer than 500 ballots were cast in that province. If fewer than 500 Kuchi ballots are cast in one province, the Kuchi ballots will be counted in another province. This is to protect the secrecy of the individual's and community's votes.

Kuchi polling stations are batched only with other Kuchi polling stations.

Regional counting facilities and counting centres

Region	Provincial counting centres
Central	Kabul
	Kapisa
	Logar
	Panjshir
	Parwan
	Wardak
Central Highlands	Bamyan
	Daikundi
East	Kunar (*)
	Laghman
	Nangarhar
	Nuristan (*)
North	Balkh
	Faryab
	Jawzjhan
	Samangan
	Saripul
Northeast	Badakshan
	Baghlan
	Kunduz
	Takhar
South	Hilmand
	Kandahar
	Nimroz
	Uruzgan
	Zabul
Southeast	Ghazni
	Khost
	Paktia
	Paktika
West	Badghis
	Farah
	Ghor
	Herat

* For security and logistical reasons, ballot papers for Kunar and Nuristan provinces will be counted in Jalalabad, in Nangarhar province.

Election internet web site

The official internet site for the 2005 *Wolesi Jirga* and Provincial Council elections is:

www.jemb.org

The internet site content will include both election results (see next section) and general information, including media releases.

Results available in the Media Centre

The results screens are available in the MC on both the PCs provided for general use and through journalists' own equipment connected to the internet via the MC LAN. After following the link from the JEMB website to the results pages, the following screen is displayed:

On this map, the names of the provinces are the links to the individual province pages, where the progress of the count for each of the provinces can be viewed (see below for an explanation of these screens).

There are four blue boxes below the map of Afghanistan:

- Progress of Count

- Turnout by Province

- Turnout by Gender

- Invalid Ballots

These all link to shaded maps of analytical data. For each of these links, the screen will open to shaded maps.

Provincial statistics and results

If you click on a province on the main page map of Afghanistan, the following screen opens:

There are 34 pages available for display—one page for each province. These pages list the number of available seats for both elections (including total seats and women's seats), the provincial capital, the number of registered voters and the number of polling centres and stations.

Just below the provincial map and provincial statistics, there are two colour-coded boxes: one box in blue for the *Wolesi Jirga* and one box in yellow for the Provincial Council election for the province. For each box, the following results are displayed:

- Progress of Count (percentage for the province will be displayed with one of three different terms next to it in parenthesis: Partial, Provisional, or JEMB-Certified Results)

- Leading Candidates

- Leading Female Candidates

- Results by Vote Order

- Results by Ballot Order

- Turnout by Gender (% Female and % Male)

- Turnout by Province

- Invalid Ballot Results (% Valid and % Invalid)

Leading Candidates

Each of the provincial pages has a link that opens to show the leading candidates:

These pages are displayed in blue for the *Wolesi Jirga* Elections and yellow for the Provincial Council Elections. The number of leading candidates shown on the screen is equivalent to half of the available seats in the province. For the English page, the name of the candidate is first displayed in English and then in Dari. The candidate number is displayed to the right of the name, and then the number of votes received.

Leading Female Candidates

This page is the same as the one described above, except all of the candidates displayed are female.

Results by Ballot Order and Results by Vote Order Pages

These two results pages include all candidates shown on the ballots and have the same blue-and-yellow colour-coded system.

Footer Banner

There is a footer banner on the bottom of every results page. The footer banner includes the following information: Kuchi election background and count progress, registration background, voting information, counting, JEMB website link, the Media Centre, election overview and election photos.

Kuchi Election

The Kuchi Election page lists the following: the number of registered voters, number of polling centres, number of polling sites, available *Wolesi Jirga* seats, available female *Wolesi Jirga* seats, leading candidates, leading female candidates, turnout by gender and invalid ballots.

All the above screens can be selected from the election results main page (www.jemb.org) and are available in English, Dari and Pashto.

In the event of a computer system and/or internet problem, results are screened in English alone and will be available to visitors in hard copy.

Certification of Results process

There are three steps to the Certification of Results:

1. Partial Results (posted for *Wolesi Jirga* or Provincial Council elections within a province as they become available)

2. Provisional Results (posted when the counts for *Wolesi Jirga* or Provincial Council elections within a province are completed)

3. Certified Results (After the Election Complaints Commission (ECC) has dealt with all complaints relating to an election, the JEMB certifies the results for *Wolesi Jirga* or Provincial Council elections within a province on the advice of the ECC.)

Part 4: Contact Details

For further information, please contact the relevant person below:

MC Manager	Paul Anderson	070.274.259
MC Deputy Manager	Bill Chilvers	070.079.635
Media Relations	Bronwyn Curran	070.164.494
	Aleem Siddique	079.069.632
	Sultan Ahmad Baheen	070.298.992
IT Management	Robert Hernandez	079.069.625
Security Manager	George Frangias	079.045.043
Accreditation	Carmen Garriga	079.843.679
	Drew Hyslop	079.547.360